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Amir Yahya Ayatollahi

Political Conservatism and Religious Reformation in Iran (1905–1979)

Reconsidering the Monarchic Legacy



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To my father

Mohammad Razi Ayatollahi

*A young religious revolutionary and an
old agnostic conservative whose
existence and support made it possible
for me to actualize the dissertation*

Acknowledgments

First and most, I want to thank my supervisor Professor Dr. Peter Nitschke for guiding and supporting me from the very unforgettable day of 22 November 2014 when I arrived in Germany till now. He has helped me always with his kind words, accurate assessments, and human sympathy. The first thing which connected us was our mutual interest in the remarkable political philosophy of Edmund Burke. The uniting theoretical concerns made it possible to actualize this joint academic cooperation. I learned so much from Professor Nitschke, and the most crucial lesson was his liberal character, undeniable modesty, and the very freedom that I was feeling during my academic journey to draw the main lines of research, although he was always willing to guide. His contemplative enthusiasm about the Middle Eastern studies along with his expertise in conservative philosophy both inspired me a lot to continue and to complete the inquiry. Secondly, I should thank Professor Dr. Meir Litvak from Tel Aviv University whom I had the honor of his acceptance as the second supervisor by the excellent offer from my first supervisor. His expertise in the history of political Shiism, Iranian studies, and modern Islamist movements made it possible for the dissertation to be assessed by his proficiency.

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During a hard time of dealing with a theme that is both academic and existential to me, I experienced joyful moments of discovering new speculative perspectives and historical visions simultaneously along with personal moments of sorrow and tear; reading, thinking, and writing about a nation or a people who still try to become a nation-state, especially after the new and still continuous demonstrations since January 2018. The current uprising is a clear departure from the whole ideological complex of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which devastated all the achievements of the Constitutional Revolution in the early years of the last 20th century.

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Summary

The current thesis is a theoretical inquiry on the situation of the body politic and its relation with the religious reform movement in the time between the Constitutional Revolution and the Islamic Revolution in general. It focuses also on the historical period of 1905 till 1946, which includes the late Qajar monarchy till the early Pahlavi era which ended with the death of the prominent Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Foroughi (1877–1942) and a remarkable religious critic and reformer Ahmad Kasravi (1890–1946). A few years later, the government abolished the Islamic terrorist group called “Devotees of Islam” or literally “Self-Sacrificers of Islam” which committed many bloody assassinations and executed its founder Navvab Safavi (1924–1956), a young radical Shia Mullah. In the same years of the active socio-political life of Foroughi and Kasravi, the young Khomeini (later an old revolutionary leader and then the founder of the Islamic Republic) wrote a lengthy treatise which can be called a primitive text of Shiite political theology.

In chapter 1, the thesis starts to define the term political conservatism in accord with the thoughts of Edmund Burke with attention to the contemporary literature of conservatism. The definition of religious reformation and the difference between Christianity and Islam in this regard and the analysis of the contradictory and relative meanings of “religious reformation” and the Shiite political theology are all discussed in chapter 2. The third chapter is dedicated to speculative and historical analyses on the relationship of state, religion, and socio-political status in the late Qajar dynasty (1905–1925) and the whole Pahlavi monarchy (1925–1979). The last chapter is an analysis of the Islamic Republic as a new political phenomenon in Iranian history and the transformations of all concepts after 1979. The same chapter assesses the possibility of Iranian conservatism, the possibility of conciliation between the two mentioned reformative plans before the collapse

of the Pahlavi system, and “the conditions of possibility” for any restoration of the monarchy in the future of Iran. The third and fourth chapters both assess the two antagonist sides of nationalism. The conclusion is an ultimate reflection on contemporary Iranian political history based on all previous considerations with emphasis on the vitality of democratic domestic policy, liberal values, and religious alterations.

A Note On Transliteration, Calendars, And References

The common use of sources in the dissertation requires an explanation. The transliteration form of Arabic and Persian words in this work follows mostly the system of the *Encyclopedia Iranica* (2015), which is different, e.g., from the method adopted by the Library of Congress (n.d.). Therefore, most of the Persian words and names have been transliterated according to the *Iranica* that contains its diacritical marks. Conventionally, all the transliterations are respected and did not change in direct quotes and cited references.

All the place names, toponyms, which have an accepted English form, are not transliterated, such as Qom, Isfahan, and Tehran. Similarly, famous personal names with frequent English usage like Reza Shah, Foroughi, and Kasravi are not transliterated, while other names are transliterated. Iranian double (or more than double) family names are expressed mostly without hyphenation. However, the hyphenated form in quotations and citations is fully preserved.

Proper nouns and common nouns both are not italicized in most cases. In some cases, a particular word or an expression in the professional context of the Shia Islamic studies or the Iranian monarchic vocabularies are being italicized as a way of assertion on the notion. Nevertheless, all the words such as Shah, Shahbanu, Iran, Allah, Islamic, and Islam have their common English usage and mostly are not italicized. On the contrary, the words Shia, Shii, Shiite, and Shiism are italicized in some cases.

In mentioning an event in Iranian history or quoting from Persian resources, we refer to the original date of the event or publication but mostly in mere its equivalent Christian date (i.e., Gregorian calendar), and usually, we do not use the Iranian Solar Hejrī calendar (A. H. S.). For example and with a negligible variation between two calendars, the year 1941 (the year of Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran) is equal to 1320 in the Iranian Solar Hejrī calendar and the expression

of the mentioned date in the current thesis, in most of the cases, is 1941 without mentioning its comparable calendar in Persian scheme. There is almost no usage of the Islamic calendar (A. H. L.) or the lunar Hejri calendar.

Unless otherwise cited, all the quotations or paraphrases from Persian, Arabic, and German resources are translated by the author of the current dissertation into English. The English translations of Persian sources have been used if they exist or available. In most of the case, all the English translations of the titles of Persian-language references are translated by the author of the current dissertation.

Introduction

A collapsing throne is like a falling mountain, which shatters the plain and leaves behind a dead sea where there once was a fertile land and a joyful dwelling place. You have only to level the mountains and the sea will thank you for it. The sea is the element of liberty and equality. Still it warns against stepping on a bed of firestone; otherwise the volcano will show itself and with it the germ of a new continent.

(Novalis. *Philosophical Writings*. Translated and Edited by Margaret Mahony Stoljar. State University of New York Press, 1997, p. 86.)

Prologue

The history of Iran from the ancient period till now shows that Iranian elites have been wanted to keep the socio-political situation as it has been of the then time. It means that despite many wars and fall of dynasties one after another, Iranian bureaucrats tried to conserve some fundamental elements of benevolent and true sovereignty. However, at the same time, they tried to change some of the structural and cultural aspects of the commonwealth. Along with the political alterations, religion has a superior place in the whole history of Iran. Nevertheless, it seems that reverence of religion is always in inverse ratio to the demand for reformations. The ancient three concepts of *God, Shah, and Homeland* shaped the Iranian minds over the centuries, and the mentioned conceptual triangle seemed to be inseparable. The very historical event of 1979, which ended the 2500 years of monarchy in Iran demonstrated that nothing is impossible in politics. Regarding the three ancient concepts, Iranians replaced the Mullah in place of King and made a new political structure, which can be summarized in the following formula of *God, Walī-i Faqih, and Homeland*. The double presence of God in the political structure meant

underlying the role of divine laws under the authority of God's "righteous" representatives as Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, insisted on his own "right" position to represent the divine messages in Iranian realpolitik.

After four decades it became clear that the newly-established body politic undermines the national interest, human rights, and the prosperity of Iranians in the light of the only theocracy in the twenty and twenty-one centuries. In other words, the current thesis is a reflection on the middle concept (Shah) and its relation with those in each side (God and Homeland) or the function of bureaucratic reforms under the monarchic system after 1905 and its ties with the religious evolutions and the effects of both, politics and religion, on the collective perception of the homeland. The main question does not belong to Iran or any specific region and is a part of the most ancient challenge in history: "How can we pursue a mutual constructive process of conservation and change?" For a nation like Iranians, the mentioned question is formed in the past tense: "How we lose what we had before by a destructive change of 1979?" Ultimately, it seems that *both democratic and secular stability*, which brings prosperity, peace, and power is the longstanding issue in Iran.

What is the Conservatism in Iranian Context?

Conservatism (in general) is an alleged patriarchal view¹ that has some essential features like a struggle with modern rationalism, defense of religion, belief in natural inequality, and respect of the property. However, it seems required to recognize some elements in this region that constitute what we call "Iranian conservatism." For example, what is the distinction between British conservatism and Iranian ones? What was the meaning of Iranian tradition in pre-revolutionary Iran? Is "tradition," in general, just a historical invention, or an actual truth? How can the Iranian conservative view of men constitute the complex idea of justice and truth that could be both moral and conservative? In other words, it is necessary to find specific local characteristics in addition to universal ones. We have many conservative teachings in the Iranian poetic tradition. Many wise men in the Iranian history of mysticism were considered conservative. Political men in this history mostly had many teachings in wisdom and divine virtues. In connection with this point, we know that there is a meaningful and robust tie between praising sublimity (in aesthetics) and believing in the sanctity of power (in political philosophy). The dissertation is not capable of answering or enlightening all these questions. However, the main idea is somehow related to many broad scopes of issues. To make it more explicit and more accurate,

¹ Patriarchalism as an ideology was first born in England in the 17th century. It guarded the concept of absolute power for the monarchy and emphasized the "paternal" power of the monarch.

it focuses only on the conservative political figures and religious reformers as the two supposed antagonist actors in the early period of the Pahlavi monarchy.

The Conservative Nature of Islam

In the area of this inquiry, it is important to assess the relationship between Iranian Muslim conservatives and Islam. It seems that in every culture, the most evident symbol of tradition is religion. Islam has a special and specific nature that lets the last version of Semitic religions play a dual role. Islam is the religion of permanence and alteration. We can see the paradoxical attributes of God and the different divine qualities. Islam is a conservative religion to preserve itself. Ironically, when Islam was in its fragile early position to fight the customs of conservatives in Mecca, it advocated a revolutionary and critical standpoint. As Radinson (1973) illustrates “Did their forefathers never reason, then, he demands, when they initiated what has become custom? Allah particularly detests those who are unwilling to subject their fundamental ideas to re-examination: such people are the worst of all in his eyes” (p. 80). When Islam is considered as the religion of unbelievers, it defends rationality to weaken conservative forces against itself. When Islam seized the socio-political realm, it becomes hostile toward infidels. Rodinson quoted from H. Lammens that the judgment of Muhammad “is not far from considering unbelief as an infirmity of the human mind” (p. 80).

It is possible to divide two kinds of reform in Islamic teachings; the positive reform is one to change oneself and the society toward applying Sharia. The negative reform is not a reform at all; the Quran and the whole Islamic perspective call it ingratitude against Allah. As far as the social arrangement is in the way of God’s commands, the people should keep the current situation, and when there is any deviation from Islamic order, the religious obligation is getting reversed, and people should change the circumstances. Applying the term “revolution” to the verses in the Quran is an anachronistic approach, and the present-day revolutionary interpretations introduced by Muslim rebels in our recent history are inconsistent, arbitrary, and be opposed to hermeneutic principles.²

² As a case of the chronological mistake in the method of the Quran’s interpretation, it is noticeable that some spiritual intellectuals in Iran inject a Buddhist concept into the body of a famous verse in the Quran. The discussed part of the verse (13:11) indicates that “Allah would never change a people’s state ‘of favour’ until they change their own state ‘of faith’” (“The Noble Quran” n.d., v. 13:11). Malekian, a well-known intellectual in Iran mostly for his vague reflections named “the conciliation between rationality and spirituality”, simply claims that the verse means that Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. He is the one who always points to this verse as a shred of religious evidence to support his spiritual idea on the necessity of inner and personal

Iranian Conservatism and New Religious Movements

It seems that reformist bureaucrats strongly believed in a *static conservative idea* of national security. Accordingly, this belief always has been opposed to any new religious movement. They think that religious alteration is a threat to national security and is harmful to the stability of the commonwealth. As a truly tragic historical case, the bureaucratic reformations of Mirza Taghi Khan Farahani known as Amir Kabir (1807–1852), chief minister to Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, were progressing. Concurrently, it was woven with bloody suppressing of Babi movement³ and the execution of Sayyed ‘Alī-Moḥammad Šīrāzī (1819–1850) the founder of Babism by the direct command of Amir Kabir.

The Babi movement was opposed from its very beginning. Less than one year after the Bab put forward his initial claim in May 1844, a trial in Baghdad ... condemned the Bab as a heretic ... In 1848–1849, the Shah sent some 6,000 troops ... against a band of about 500 Babis who had taken up defensive positions near the Caspian at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsī. Eventually in May 1849, the starving Babis were induced to surrender on the promise of a safe conduct, and were then set upon and massacred. ... In the course of the year 1850, the Prime Minister decided that the best way of putting an end to the Babi upheaval was to execute the founder of the movement who was being held in prison. The Bab was brought to Tabriz and executed there in July 1850. (Momen 2005, pp. 221, 222)

The collapse of Babism had various causes includes revoking the fear of danger in the Shiite establishment due to their lack of interest to tolerate any competitors.

reformation. However, the verse has a different story and the context is also irrelevant to the Malekian’s interpretation. It is about the divine punishment for the people who do not acknowledge Allah and commit sins against his orders. Then, it continues to justify the punishment as a self-harming of those ungraceful and ingratitude people. The message of the verse is that the punishment is nothing but a reflection of your own deeds. Therefore, there is no blame for Allah to punish human beings and they should blame themselves. Anti-methodologically, cutting a part of a verse and neglecting what is before and after it, could be considered as an arbitrary interpretation. The selected part of the verse is also capable of the non-spiritual and outer revolutionary interpretations. The context is against both.

³ Babism (Babiyye or “the Babi Faith”) is a religious movement that flourished in Persia from 1844 to 1852, then lingered on in exile in the Ottoman Empire (especially Cyprus) as well as underground. Its founder was Sayyid ‘Alī Muhammad Shirazi, who took the title Bāb—meaning “Gate”—from a Shii theological term. Despite Islamic messianic movements, the Babī movement signaled a break with Islam and built a new religious system. While the Babī movement was violently opposed and crushed by the clerical and government establishments in the mid-1850s, the Babi movement led to the founding of the Bahai Faith which sees the religion brought by the Bāb as a predecessor to their own religion and gives a renewed significance to the Babi movement.

Moreover, Babism had a variety of Messianic claims and could not skip from its own “theophanic chaos.” In the early Babi stage, the Bāb’s authority was derived in a hidden way from “the overriding charismatic image of the Imam,” whereas the final step was an explicit cancellation of all previous Babi perceptions and raising into a prophetic realm (Dennis MacEoin 2008, pp. 280, 281). In the political sense, the governmental fear from Babism was not illusional and had a reason in the realpolitik. The Babi movement had an anti-Qajar aspect. Even after the execution of the founder, “A young man widely regarded as the ‘successor’ (*wasī*) of the Bāb-Mīrzā Yaḥyā Nūrī Subḥ-i Azal (c. 1830–1912), seems to have remained faithful to the long-term goal of overthrowing the Qajar state by subversion” (Denis MacEoin 1983, p. 220). In the case of repression of religious minorities and dissidents, it is important to consider the historical fact that many Iranian intellectuals in the Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911), with many demands of bureaucratic reformations, are among Babis and later Bahais. Moreover, the new content of Babi thought, its revolutionary branch as Azali, and eventually “the Westernism of the Bahā’is, who changed original Bābism” (Keddie 1962, p. 268) all prove that Babism was also a religious outcome of the early Western influence in Iran. Therefore, Babism can be considered as a kind of radical religious reformation in the Iranian Shiism. Related to the political economy and its connection with religious transformations, some scholars believe that the Babi movement was a revolt due to the economic crisis which formed itself in a religious gestalt.

The Babi revolt of 1848–1851, basically a revolt of merchants in religious guise, was crushed in blood. But it was followed by a triumphant rebellion that brought the cancellation of a concession given to a British firm that monopolized domestic and foreign trade in Iranian tobacco. By midcentury, the country’s economy had undergone tremendous changes: agricultural land was increasingly falling into the hands of rich merchants or government bureaucrats who now geared production to foreign markets; the peasantry was increasingly exploited; and impoverished peasants and artisans, deprived of their livelihood, sought their subsistence elsewhere, mostly by emigrating. (Chaqueri 1995, p. 24)

As a successor, Azali is a religious branch of Babism, and its name has taken from its founder Mīrzā Yaḥyā Nūrī Šobḥ-e Azal (1830–1912), who received the title of the only legitimate successor to the Bāb. After the death of Azali founder Mīrzā Yaḥyā Nūrī Šubḥ-i Azal (d. 1333/1912), the leadership passed to Ḥājī Mīrzā Yaḥya Dawlatābādi (d. 1359/1939), son of Subḥ-i-Azal and a notable Constitutionalist of the 1906 Revolution, and one of the founders of the modern educational system in Iran. As the political aspect of each religious alteration, the Azali designation was more adherent to the early conservative approach of Babism and restraint itself to

the Babi non-clerical nobility rather than its later excessive innovations. However, Azali did not hold back from Babi's radical confrontation with Qajar and Babi's political standpoint.

Although the basic motivation for these Bābīs-cum-freethinkers seems to have been an originally religious desire to see the fall of the 'unjust' kingdom of the Qājārs and its replacement by a new order of things, the programmes they espoused and the political ideals they advocated were derived almost exclusively from European thinkers and expressed secular western views often obviously at variance with the essentially theocratic hopes of Babism. (Denis MacEoin 1983, p. 220)

In this regard, as MacEoin (2008) reminds us, Bahaism became the first crucial shift as a successor to Azalism by promoting political quietism. In a relative comparison, the Azali is considered as a kind of religious conservatism that distanced from the militant feature of Babism. If Babism is recognized as the politicization under Shiite discourse and Bahaism as the restoration of earlier Shiite quietism (Denis MacEoin 1983), then Azalism stands in the middle of *Babi radical activism* (in the form of religious militancy) and *Bahai culturalism* with radical prudence to avoid politics. However, the moderation of Azalism did not prevent the fear of Naser al-Din Shah for a renewal of Babi intrigue to undermine the state by provoking demands for political and social reform. Therefore, as MacEoin articulates, Qajars considered Azalism as a resembled revolutionary activity to Babism.

With all these considerations, it seems that the religious reformation is woven with at least a minimum tendency to engage in the political realm. Therefore, the typical Western perspective toward the Islamic reformation can be misled by emphasizing mere on the term "reform" and concluding the religious quietism as a natural and expected outcome from the desired reform process. The look from liberal pacifism toward the Islamic reformation neglects the political entity of Islam, which shaped early Islamic history. The crucial point to the Islamic reformation is to determine its political activism within the framework of an assertive liberal democracy. As discussed before, Shiite quietism in peculiar centuries was also a prudent political decision due to face with the excessive prosecutions under Umayyad and ʿAbbāsīd caliphates. In other words, Shiite quietism was a result of the temporal impossibility to achieve their political ambitions.

Concerning the principal "sacred" texts of Babism, the Shiite clerical judgment still pronounces that the Babi texts contain some Islamic teachings which are articulated deliberately in a vague and clumsy way (Böröni 2000). The clerical evaluation of dissident's texts wanted to indicate indirectly that the Babi and Bahai leaders, regardless of their imitation from Islamic sources, were almost illiterate and had no Islamic knowledge. The sense of clerical insecurity is based evidently on facing a

similar manner that is pursued by new religious movements. If clear writing is a product of clear thinking, then a considerable amount of Shiite clerical texts cannot also survive from the same analytical examination. In this matter, Shiism is the predecessor of Babism and Bahaism to be imprecise in thoughts and expressions.

One of the most remarkable constitutionalists, Mirzā Fatali Akhundzādeh,⁴ indicates in his writings that the massacre of Babis was a shocking governmental deed of banality, savagery, and barbarism because no civilized land punishes dissidents in this brutal way. Importantly, Akhundzādeh (1972) considered the mentioned incident as evidence in the Iranian history that the mere moral teachings have not changed the cultural superstitions and he emphasizes the vitality of critique as the Western cultural heritage and concludes that the real civilized progression is based mostly on the lawlessness not religious or moral pulpits.

Iranian Conservatism versus Religious Reformations

Were our reformist bureaucrats have an accurate idea of religious reformation? Were our religious reformists have the right sense of bureaucratic reformation? Modern Iranian history shows us that Reformist bureaucrats and religious reformists are always conflicted with each other. For example, Mohammad Ali Foroughi (1877–1942), as a great symbol of Iranian conservatism, contempts Mirzā Malkam Khān (1833–1908), a prominent Iranian modernist and famous constitutionalist, by saying that all of his works is nothing but a primitive copy of Voltaire’s writings. On the other hand, Ahmad Kasravi (1890–1946), a notable Iranian linguist, historian, and religious reformer, suppose Foroughi amongst what he called *the company of treachery*, which can be considered as one of Kasravi’s conspiracy theories. He believed that Foroughi ruins the Reza Shah’s reforms and prepares circumstances to revival fanatics, i.e., Mullahs and their Shiite authority. Despite these accusations, we know that Foroughi made lots of efforts to bring the bill of secular laws to the parliament and he succeeded in enacting it against many objections from clerics and their adherents. Moreover, Kasravi knew Foroughi as one of the main objectors to his pure linguistic movements, and later he was surprised by Foroughi’s suggestion to Reza Shah for instituting The Persian Academy.

⁴ Mirzā Fatali Akhundzādeh (12 July 1812 – 9 March 1878), was an Iranian author, playwright, and intellectual. He is also prominent for his role in developing Iranian literature and for his writings of European-inspired plays in the Azeri Turkic languages. Akhundzādeh is one of the predecessors of modern Iranian nationalism.

Iranian Conservatism and the Problem of Secularism

The primitive insight of the research is that the specific conservative approach of Iranian reformist bureaucrats had consequences against their goals. They were suspicious about any religious reformations. On the other hand, our religious reformists seemed to be unaware of the importance of institutional reforms, negotiating with the clerical establishment and the stability of the political situation. This mutual ignorance made the bureaucratic reforms abortive and put the seeds of religious reforms in an unfruitful land. Therefore, these questions remain on the circumstances of the Muslim world and especially in the Middle East: What kind of secularism is useful and positive for the Iranian society? Is authoritative secularism works or the region needs democratic ones? Is there any third way that can be a local combination of both assertive and democratic secularism simultaneously? Is there any kind of *local secularism* or we have only one universal type? If the reality of secularism is one and unique, then in what manner we should pursue to apply its principles in Iran? What was the idea of secularism in the mind of Iranian bureaucrat reformists and religious ones in the 1940s? Both groups of our reformists did not have an accurate, precise, actual, and comprehensive image of secularization in their reflections.

In the end, the more fundamental and ultimate theoretical questions can be articulated as follows: Firstly, how can be converged the conservation of the current socio-political situation and the reform plan to change some of its elements? How this dualistic purpose conciliate with the religious institution and its regressive function as the supposed barrier for modernizing political structure and culture in Iran? Secondly, what is the relation between bureaucratic reformations and religious ones in Iran? What is the desired and favorable connection between these two kinds of reforms? How can we conciliate these two historical and antagonist reformative plans for having a more beneficial and accountable socio-political construction that could be both democratic and secular? As is discussed in sections [4.1.3](#) and [4.2.1](#) under the assessment of Pahlavi conservatism and the intellectual pretexts of the Islamic Revolution, seeking any local solution instead of pursuing global achievements, is prone to form a nativist ideology whether in the secular or religious gestalt. For example, human history has a collective experience of confining religion to the

boundaries of secular legality.⁵ The generality of the historical heritage of secularism in the West cannot be neglected at the expense of presenting a semi-Islamic form of secular policy or a semi-despotic form of democracy.

The Methodological Approach, Historical Period, and Primitive Outcome

The basic methodological attitude is primarily theoretical and historical. The research is library-based. The method of assessment is analytical with a comparative approach. The only theoretical axiom of the thesis is the acceptance of liberal conservatism, though it is explained in various phrases of the text. The inevitability of perspectivism made every academic research partly partial and limited to a specific standpoint. Nevertheless, the thesis remains impartial concerning the different faces of each historical fact. The areas of knowledge for researching on this issue are political philosophy, theories of power, Islamic studies, and Iranian studies. The historical period of the treatise is confined to the ancient post-period (the Islamic time). In general, it focuses on the recent century that includes the late Qajar dynasty and the whole age of the Pahlavi Monarchy and precisely the decade that led to the first collapse of the Pahlavi's body politic due to the side effects of the Second World War and later followed by the succession of the last Shah of Iran. However, all of the thesis is full of indications of the eventual downfall of the Pahlavi monarchy and the emergence of the Islamic Revolution as the bitter end of an ill-fated conservative policy. Moreover, it was inevitable and necessary to dedicate the last chapter to the Islamic Republic as the current historical entity of the relationship between politics and religion.

The Constitutional Revolution and the Islamic Revolution are the most important and effective events in contemporary Iranian history that need to be perceived and analyze to achieve the purpose of the investigation. The dissertation presumes that the roots of the Islamic Revolution with all of its enormous consequences are to be found in the partially secular policies of the monarchy, the Islamic demands of the society, and the xenophobic tendencies of the opposition. Therefore, the duration between the two revolutions is undeniably essential. The inspirative fact that gave birth to the current inquiry was the speculative approach toward the conflict between Kasravi and Foroughi as the main historical characters at the time of the young Shah.

⁵ In his ontological criticism on the Iranian theoretical religiosity, Dustdar (1993) asserts that only familiar cultures have familiar questions based on shared challenges. In a satirical tone, he emphasizes that reading and discussing Western philosophy produces an illusion that we are also thinking in the way that it is pursued in the West. Dustdar denies the shared cultural problems in the East based on the fundamental differences between the worldview of the East and the West. Nevertheless, we can accept that our problems are different, but the art of problem-solving can be inspired by the West.

The importance and priority of inspiration from these two important figures are that both of them had an influential role in the Constitutional Revolution of the late Qajar dynasty. Peculiarly, it is worth reminding that Foroughi had an exceptional chance in his political life to deal with three kings (the last of Qajar and the two of Pahlavis) and Kasravi is continuously remembered in Iranian debates for his anti-clerical legacy and is recognized as the most iconic critics of the Shiite fundamentalism.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remind that the current dissertation uses the mentioned conflict between those two figures as a theoretical clue to seek the very tension peculiarly in the whole period of Pahlavi and to develop the main presumption by a wide variety of other historical points and similar occasions which have a potential to be analyzed within the framework of relation between politics and religion; the supposed Iranian liberal conservatism (or bureaucratic reformation) and the non-existent religious reformation as a movement with the expectation of an assertive influence on the body politic. Put another way, the destructive and vain relationship between Ahmad Kasravi and Mohammad Ali Foroughi provided the theoretical motivation and gave a historical inspiration to rethink the probable similar relationship between Iranian liberal conservatism and Iranian religious reformations in other involved personages and also beyond any figures.⁶ It means the mentioned relationship is also discussed between two socio-political institutions and not only between famous persons who belonged to them. Although the whole selected historical period is somehow an extended portion of the contemporary Iranian era, the subject of the inquiry is a peculiar and determining factor in the thesis.

⁶ The figurative case study of Foroughi and Kasravi will be specifically discussed in a separate work as a dedicated monograph to them and their relationship from a speculative perspective.

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What is Political Conservatism?

1

1.1 Political Conservatism: Concept and History

Many prominent figures since ancient times could be regarded as conservative. Cicero (106–43 BC) can be considered as a conservative Roman statesman, and there are deliberate references to him in Edmund Burke's *Reflections* to present the ancient affirmation of the unity between divinity and state. The assertive skepticism of David Hume (1711–1776) about reasoning concerning ends as opposed to means, is a reasonable ground to consider him partly a conservative. The observation of the Austrian economist Carl Menger (1840–1921) on the history of social institutions, language, religion, law, and the state itself, which illustrates that we founded all of them more based on our nature than our consciousness, can be viewed as a conservative historical vision (Barry 1986). In general, Conservatism, whether it is an ideology or not, is a kind of political philosophy from the post-Enlightenment era.

1.1.1 Understanding Politics

Politics has always been present in human life from the beginning of history until now. However, when the discussion is about understanding politics, then the issue goes into the realm of philosophical speculations on politics. It is not odd to claim that we inherited political philosophy from the ancient Greek and Roman heritage. The etymology of the term is rooted in ancient Greek. “[the] political” comes from the polis or ancient city-states. “Philosophy,” in the way Plato and the platonic school coined it, refers to the “love of wisdom” (Philosophia). However,

the invention of “political philosophy” at that time did not understand with all of its modern implications and impressions as it has changed in recent centuries. In this regard, it is important to be aware of the whole Greek philosophic tradition had woven with other genres like history, art, and rhetoric, and perceiving the political is a coherent zone of Greek knowledge from both the universe and the human being. In other words, understanding politics cannot be limited to only one genre as political philosophy. Moreover, the Greek ontology itself was a speculative revolution came out of the complicated and unclear variety of old explanation of the reality and the way humans understand it. Plato’s theories, in particular, have a less decisive effect on our contemporary global problems. Specifically, we have changed our world during past centuries in a thoroughly unprecedented way that forces us to rethink our theories, based on the present condition of human existence, to achieve a different insight into human nature and to be able facing with a whole new kind of problems and difficulties (von Fritz 1974). However, regarding general and vital questions, the ancient philosophy may lose to give a specific answer, but it is still a human speculative heritage that puts a point of hesitation and circumspection in our minds to rethink ideas and revise our deeds in the modern world.

In the Medieval and the Renaissance era, there were wide variations of ideas to understand the political entity. As Nitschke (2000) articulates, some philosophers were functionalist and saw politics as an instrument for peace and legal justification of power, some of them wanted to form politics in a firm systematic science and others defined the political order as a process of actualizing the law of God or at least, a positive formulation and executive phase of a sanctified society which oriented at divine commandments. In the Enlightenment era and all its historical events, natural rights (derived supposedly from human reason) were the primary realm of politics. In the 18th century, philosophers and revolutionaries both believed that every human being could lay claim to natural rights, apart from social class or national identity. Accordingly, politics was not a local issue or a field of nobles. Instead, it became an international project. Individuals understood the message of Encyclopédistes very well; they found a prepared way of freedom in front of themselves to express their own ideas on politics and the struggles of people in different parts of the world. The new dedicated place to human reason in the 18th century in order to acknowledge natural rights, not only gave unprecedented authority to public opinion but raised public opinion to the international level (F. Ferguson 2007). In other words, the Enlightenment has an unprecedented feature that can be considered as “the valorization of reason” (Putnam 2005, p. 97). Nevertheless, politics was getting born when humans wanted to dominate others or to be dominated by a real man or a heavenly creature or

creator. The personification of power is the birthplace of politics. Therefore, politics is the story of human life in the sense of inventing a better collective form of living to protect individuals from danger. The very life is political, and politics is embodied by it. Politics becomes perceptible when life shows its necessities and all the requirements of a living man could be possible in the reign of politics.

We have come to recognize that the political is the total, and as a result we know that any decision about whether something is unpolitical is always a political decision, irrespective of who decides and what reasons are advanced. (Schmitt 2005, p. 55)

The quoted passage from Carl Schmitt in *Political Theology* is a remarkable viewpoint about the nature of politics. It means that politics is not something we can avoid as a pious attitude or prevent the people from interfering in it. Politics is the total, and man could define as the only political animal among other species. Politics is not merely an abstraction of estates, which represents itself in laws. Instead, it is a concrete situation involving power with the complexities of the commonwealth; the body politic of each society that makes any sovereignty possible. By this means, politics is the art of preservation and alteration. It is vital for good and lawful sovereignty to walk through the line between an exception and chaos (Schmitt 2005). The political order must include the extraordinary situation which could apply to a particular one. The necessity makes the ultimate decision about the way of ruling in each circumstance. Who decides that one particular state of affairs is an exception due to an obvious necessity? Sovereign is the decision-maker but in accord with the constitution.

Conservatism is a kind of political insight on the recognition of necessities, exceptions, and legal applying of authority. In the conservative approach, any exception finds its way to be solved within the constitutional framework, and the constitution is ready to face an exception. Therefore, the irrationality of suspension of the law because of an exception has nothing to do with the “passion” or “the philosophy of the concrete life.” Its “comfortable superficiality” is simultaneously its unpleasant factuality and has to be adapted to the complexities of reality (Schmitt 2005, p. 68). In contrary to Schmitt, Burkean standpoint illustrates that the law is valid and the validity of the exception derives from the validity of the law. The dialectic relationship between these two makes it possible to respect the boundaries of the law and its dignity in an exceptional situation. That is why Rousseau insisted on the harmful consequences of the inflexibility of laws. The legislator cannot predict every possible difficulty. Many other probable situations occur as an actual affair, and the juristic system has to find an answer or solution due to deal with the reality by being realistic and lawful at the same time. By

adhering to the philosophy of Montesquieu, Burke asserts that legal institutions inevitably change with the societies in which they operate.

The present system of our Laws ... like our language and our learning, is a very mixed and heterogeneous mass; ... and compounded, altered, and variously modified, according to the various necessities, which the manners, the religion, and the commerce of the people, have at different times imposed. (Lock 2008, p. 150)

As a British constitutionalist, Burke is more prudent to allow any deviance from the law. That is why he praises the ancestral way that settled the succession of the crown in the joint reign of William and Mary, daughter of King James, in a critical time of British history. Burke describes the legislature's decision as "an act of necessity, in the strictest moral sense in which necessity can be taken." He considers it as a "temporal solution of continuity" or "the act of necessity to countenance the idea of hereditary succession," but most prudently to be near to the British monarchical precedence (Burke 2003, pp. 14, 15). The ultimate purpose of all these theoretical concerns is that in any upheaval or confliction, "the authority of the law" and the body politic is not affected and the crisis be directed only to "the mode of their administration." It is also explained the political reasonability of the constitutional, responsible, and responsive power.

The inflexibility of laws, which prevents them from being swayed by events, can in certain cases render them harmful, and this, in a crisis, can cause the ruin of a state. ... It is wrong therefore to attempt to make political institutions so rigid as to deny oneself the power to put them into abeyance. Even Sparta allowed its laws to lie dormant. (Rousseau 1999, p. 153)

The liberal conservatism teaches that the distinction between anarchy and order is distinguishable only and if the law could be considered even in its minimum meanings and implications in an emergency in which the concrete necessity could make the constitution vulnerable to be broken or passed away. The existence of law has to be seen on exceptional occasions to avoid political chaos and undemocratic decision-making. From the conservative point of view, any crisis on the horizon of politics needs to be treated through lawful solutions. There is a thin line to cross the legal sovereignty and enter into the autocratic one with the excuse of real exceptions. Reality is supposed to be managed by the law, and the law has to be always dynamic in accord with reality.

1.1.2 Understanding Conservatism

Proposing a definition of “conservatism” that gains a consensus is a challenge due to “serious conceptual difficulties” related to the variety of conservatism. For example, the literal meaning derived from the verb “conserve” and the skeptic preference to be prudent in a given social change. However, the commonsense approach to define conservatism becomes unsatisfactory when self-styled conservatives advocate radical changes (Eccleshall 2013, p. 48). Conservatism criticizes a utopian idea of the power of reason, and the capacity of human beings to reach perfection. Conservatism gives authenticity first to authority than freedom. In other words, freedom is meaningful in terms of political authority. Without the powerful body politic, freedom is nothing but anarchy. Clarifying the related meaning of political concepts, Nitschke (2018) reminds us that freedom in political philosophy first and foremost is a collective invention or tradition. It is the same as the social essence of the concept, whether to observe freedom as a perennial heritage or as a revolutionary achievement. Instead of social liberty, individual freedom is more the concept of moral philosophy or logic. Freedom in political thought means a shared property that its continuity could guarantee personal freedom, which is possible and meaningful only under a civil society. Therefore, the main concern of political speculations is the freedom within a specific body politic. On the relationship between freedom and power, being skeptical about abstract reasoning and also recommending to appeal to the tradition are two remarkable points of conservatism. Its standpoint is always pessimistic on fundamental changes and just allowed a limited political reform. Roger Scruton illustrates the roots of traditional conservatism in the thoughts of prominent philosophers in the eighteenth century.

Traditional conservatism has been hostile to intellectuals but not always hostile to ideas, and the one idea about which it was absolutely clear was that of identity. The point was made at the outset by Burke and Hume. A political community is not a business partnership or a contractual deal. It is a historical settlement bound by custom, loyalty, and the sense of belonging of a kind that finds its highest expression in a national culture. It depends upon neighborliness and little platoons as Burke called them and upon the love between generations that only the family can properly provide. As to what else it requires, what for example in the way of religion, schooling, legal order, and sovereignty. This has been the topic of conservative philosophy ever since. (Bibliothek des Konservatismus 2017)

Conservatism is usually perceived as identical to pragmatism. There is a division between two conservative standpoints. *Relativistic conservatism* holds that

if a particular ideology works well in a given society, it can be improved based on human experiences and collected wisdom. The assessment of whether something is functionally failed or has well proceeded depends on values accepted in the relevant society (Hamilton 2019). The general conservative adherence to political realism, on this account, leads to a *a priori* tendency of accepting given socio-political regulations. On the contrary, as Hamilton clarifies, *non-relativistic conservatism* asserts that particularism does not necessarily end up with relativism. On this basis, revolutionary and autocratic systems are not prone to gradual changes and are not liable to a conservative view. Conservatism is situational, but not every situation does allow to apply conservative principles. Relevantly, the dismissal of Burke by Scottish political theorist and liberal supporter of the Revolution, James Mill (1773–1836) is effective only against the position of relativistic conservatism. What Mill names the realization of “evil”, the “artificial admiration” of every ancient existence, and what he attributed to Burke’s attitude to protect, glorify and defend everything only due to its “existence” rather than its “goodness”, and his accusation that Burke wants to stamp “the imitative herd of mankind ... with the seal of his reprobation” and with “his usual felicity of language”, all come out of Mill’s assumption that conservatism is a kind of relativism (Mill 1826, para. 472).

It seems that the capacity to express the conservative criterion of an efficacious body politic, in terms of dynamic tradition, is mostly belonged to non-relativistic conservatism. The discussed non-relativist standpoint is slightly rational and universal while remaining particularist. Nevertheless, conservative philosophy is firstly against radical rationalism. As Edmund Burke described it, conservatism is a defender theory of the practical wisdom that exists in institutions and traditions. Conservatism criticizes abstract planning but does not oppose operative plans. It is a theory against theoretical articulations and abstract reflections. It gives value more to experience than to theory. Regarding the British political history, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was a peaceful, legal, and moral demand to prevent the subversion of “traditional liberties” and to shift away from the balance of power “from the executive [the king and his ministers] and towards Parliament and public opinion” (Lock 2008, p. 303). Burke contrasted the destructive French Revolution and the constructive Glorious Revolution of England in 1688. The first wanted to change the whole society brutally in accord with abstract ideas, and the latter was a wise plan of the British ancestors to reform the political structure peacefully. The first was a kind of constructive restoration, and the latter was a destructive innovation. From a conservative perspective, changes without referring to the tradition led the society to a chaotic situation. The Enlightenment era radically questioned the old social order and the hierarchy inherited from the

Christian civilization. The radical intellectuals who inherited the absolute priority of rationality could accept the tradition only if survives extreme rational criticism. On the contrary, conservatism rejects pure rationality as a metaphysical hypothesis that is not related to particular circumstances.

The most crucial point is that human beings are who they are, and their identities are not so willing to change. People being shaped more by accidents than plans, and they are more non-rational than being rational. Conservatism is pessimistic on human nature and accepts all of its effects and lacks perfection. We can name this standpoint as affectionate pessimism. Our nature is not perfect, and that is why we need to learn the teachings of our ancestors. That is why he praised “prejudice” as an inheritance that includes ancestral wisdom and pursuing the way that connected the past to the present and will join it to the future. All the generations are participating in the perennial existence of the constitution that lies under the universal kingdom. The relationship between conservatism and Christianity is also needed to be revised in accord with the idea of human imperfection. Burke’s emphasis on human imperfections is not necessarily related to his personal religious belief, although “God is important to Burke in both aesthetics and moral theory” (Burke 1996, p. xviii). Part of the Enlightenment era was against institutions and tried to destroy them because the revolutionary liberalism of that time saw institutions as a repressor of the “innate moral goodness” of human beings (Quinton 1978, p. 14). However, there is no such intrinsic tie between the conservative idea of moral imperfection and the Christian axiom of original sin in the European tradition.

But although a poor opinion of the moral potentialities of man, on his own and unaided by divine grace, is a central element of Christian doctrine that opinion does not strictly presuppose the Christian conception of man as a divinely created being who has fallen into sin. Secular thinkers, in the strongest sense of the word, thinkers who are overtly hostile to religion, can consistently affirm man’s moral imperfection as empirically discovered fact about human origins. (Quinton 1978, p. 14)

The moral imperfection and the intellectual imperfection are possible to be derived from religious beliefs, but they are not necessarily religious presupposition, and all this epistemological and moral pessimism are derivable from “non-religious considerations” (Quinton 1978, p. 16). As an avoidance from any confusion to similarize the conservative idea of intellectual imperfection to the religious dogma (the necessity of obeying the divine revelation), it should be mentioned that the conservative result of a similar premise is thoroughly different. The human imperfection leads us to the necessity of empirical science of politics which is not *a priori*, but conversely based on the human experience as

a dynamic mixture of the ancient political tradition of ancestors and the actual understanding of the vital changes to keep the continuity of the body politic.

The science of constructing a commonwealth, or renovating it, or reforming it, is, like every other experimental science, not to be taught *à priori*. Nor is it a short experience that can instruct us in that practical science; because the real effects of moral causes are not always immediate. (Burke 2003, p. 51)

Burke explains that an excellent idea, at first glance, may arise misery lately. Therefore, the natural gap between theory and practice cannot be compensated by abstraction and perfectionism. The conservative conclusion on the vitality of the institutions and the main one as the state came out from the mentioned idea of human imperfection. Conclusively, the imperfection which is discussed in conservatism is part of its rational pessimism which in, in its turn, against both divine politics, i.e., political clericalism, and the metaphysical tendency to transcend politics into abstract ideas. The emphasis on the experimental foundation of politics is also recognizable in the great philosophers of the Middle Ages.

Much Christian philosophizing has been concerned with the effective range of the human reason, unassisted by the divine grace of revelation. For Aquinas the domain of the political, the phenomenon of government, is not of divine institution. The principles that should govern human conduct within it are, in his view, accessible to the natural powers of the human intellect. (Quinton 1978, p. 15)

Conservatism is sometimes criticized as a sentimental approach toward the past. It is discussed in section 3.4.2 about the fundamental difference between conservatism and romanticism within the assessment of Western attitude toward Pahlavi and Khomeini in the light of Burke's philosophical aesthetics. However, it could be interpreted as the defense of the indisputable wisdom of ancestors. In other words, it praises the customs because it worked and still works, not for the mere old characteristics. Moreover, conservatism asserts the importance of a particular situation. It does not mean that we have to accept any particular circumstances for their particularity. Conservatism is a theory of politics against abstract ideas, metaphysical fallacies, and utopian ideals. However, it never leads to evaluate any political situation. Burkean particularism does not justify the relative perspective, which gives legitimacy to every kind of despotism or tyrannical state.

There are many ostensible overlaps, deceptive similarities, and common obscurities on the conceptual border between conservatism and other theories in politics, ethics, epistemology, philosophy, and metaphysics. Conservatism indicates the importance of common sense, but it is different from common sense as

a philosophy. Conservatism has its metaphysical foundations about human beings, society, and history. Burkean conservative skepticism to reason and the rational abstraction is fundamentally different from Scottish common-sense philosophy as it is articulated by Thomas Reid (1710–1796). His common-sense attitude is opposed to skepticism and defends the desired transparency and self-knowledge of human thoughts (D. Stewart et al. 1915). Conservatism has a conceptual distinction from a sole assertion on our *simple apprehension*. Instead, it criticizes the simplistic decisiveness of the French Enlightenment and insists on the acknowledgment of human defects and complexities.

Conservatism can also be traced into epistemological debates. Probably, “the past” is the most fundamental concept in conservative philosophy which finds its given grounds in the epistemic conservatism that “an agent is in some measure justified in maintaining a belief simply in virtue of the fact that the agent has that belief. Thus an agent may, according to the conservative principle, correctly say ‘I happen to believe it-and that is part of my justification for continuing to believe it!’” (Christensen 1994, p. 69). As Christensen indicates, the conservative reasoning to justify the continuity of holding a certain belief *would be beneficial from a pragmatic/evolutionary perspective*. About the most comprehensive way of philosophizing, there is a prudent restraint that “any plausible account of the nature of Western philosophy ought to be able to accommodate a good number, if not most, of the central metaphilosophical insights and its greatest figures” (Boulter 2007, p. 4). However, it is considered as a conservative restriction, which leads to explain *the past* instead of the present. There is a reasonable tendency in the radical modern epistemology to question the justifiability of epistemic conservatism and “to resist the temptation to sanction even an attenuated form of dogmatic thinking in our epistemology” (Christensen 1994, p. 70). Moreover, not every assertion on “the past” makes a certain standpoint conservative. The Islamic traditionalism, which is discussed in section 4.1.3, and even Christian traditionalism, which is discussed in section 3.4.2, are both different from conservatism in political philosophy. In general, as it is discussed in section 1.2, religious traditionalism is not necessarily ended to conservative policy, though conservatism has its own philosophy toward religion as the most vital part of the tradition. Similarly, there are conceptual differences between conservatism, libertarianism, neo-conservatism, and neo-liberalism. Only on the latter, Andy Hamilton gives a well-articulative explanation.

Libertarianism influences neo-conservatism, but—as an extreme form of liberalism—is at best neutral towards conservatism’s emphasis on tradition. Perhaps neo-liberalism is libertarianism plus related economic doctrines, while neo-conservatism is libertarianism plus elements of traditional conservatism. (Hamilton 2019, para. 83)

Eventually, it is a controversial debate that conservatism is inherently and in itself against any ideology, and it is not also an ideology. Depends on what one could mean by the term “ideology,” the result is different. Conservatism is against any form of dogmatism, whether under the name of rationalism or religiosity. However, conservatism, like any other ontology or perspective has some axioms, presumptions, and elements which are not subjected to be proved or argued. For example, the distinction between “tradition” and “new” is one of the essential foundations of conservatism. Even if the very notion of “tradition” being questioned by a historical assessment that it is also an invention of humans in a particular part of history, the distinction would be still valid based on the confrontation between two inventions; old and new.

1.2 Conservatism and Religion: A Brief Study of Edmund Burke

Edmund Burke is a multi-dimensional personage in the Enlightenment. The theory and praxis were integrated into his philosophy and his political life. Burke theorized ontological inequality and pursued the possibility of political inequality. His speculations in theology, aesthetics, moral philosophy, history, political theory, and public affairs form a wide range of concerns which “were intimately connected” (Burke 1996, p. xvi). Burke’s defense of tradition includes all socio-political mechanisms of the medieval era. Religion, specifically Christianity, as a vital part of the tradition was always in the center of his thoughts. In his thoughts, Christianity and conservatism are in an “intimate and at times seemingly necessary relationship to each other” (Quinton 1978, p. 9). Pursuing his practical attitude in understanding and analyzing society, politics, and history, Burke focuses on the “moral efficiency” of Christian faith, instead of making himself dealing with the theological complexities (Burke 1996, p. 2). Despite his personal religious belief, Burke differentiates himself as a politician and philosopher from a merely ecclesiastical perspective. There is an extensive debate on what Burke really believed as a Christian. Burke was raised in a family of Catholic background with various Christian education between his brothers and sisters from Catholic to Protestants. “These divided loyalties ... account for Burke’s all-round

comprehension of society” (Wärnberg 2016, p. 9). He himself was being educated as a Protestants, but there are many claims concerning the influence of Catholic conservatism in his early works. Some other scholars claim that Anglican theology inspired Burke in his ontological view of the world. There is also a discussion about whether Catholic conservatism shaped his philosophy or Burke concentrated only on moral and civilizing aspects of religion. Nevertheless, Wärnberg professes that “a historical actor’s actions will never be solely determined by his religious, political or moral viewpoints. They must be taken into account as one factor among many” (p. 26). Therefore, the emphasis on the stubborn role of Burke’s Christian faith in his conservative philosophy does not seem to be a consistent interpretation of Burke.

This is not to deny the sincerity of Burke’s religious convictions, but it is to deny that they play any crucial part in sustaining his political beliefs. ... The religious allusions that frequently occur in his political writings are not merely ornamental rhetoric. On the other hand, they are not really working parts of his political argument. (Quinton 1978, p. 66)

The French Revolution in 1789, as the biggest crisis of European civilization, forced him to investigate the origins of this event and, at the same time, to rethink the capability and potency of tradition to reform and improve the polity. He sets up his theoretical position based on criticizing the Enlightenment philosophy. At that time, many political and intellectual figures across Europe were involved showing their sincere devotion to the early revolutionary occurrences in France. Many writers, philosophers, and politicians later went to a kind of solidarity for approving the French Revolution in general. They even tried to make the destructive deeds of revolutionaries appear less important than it was. Their enlightened reason did not only justified the radical anticlericalism in then French affairs like the mass executions of priests and exiling about four thousand non-juring¹ priests (Mignet 2006, p. 173). They also de-emphasized other aspects of the French Revolution under the name of liberty; property confiscation, all the brutalities like the governmental violence against French citizens, rule of

¹ The Civil Constitution of the Clergy became one of the most revolutionary inventions for the obligatory oath which forcing priests to swear allegiance to the revolutionary state, and in its process deliberately made a big difference between jurors and non-jurors. However, at the center of planned purpose, it was an administrative document, which aimed to reform the church in accordance with the newly established criteria of revolutionaries. Related to French history, non-jurors were clergies who refused to show their official loyalty, by the means of the oath, to the state. They resisting against the mentioned Civil Constitution of the Clergy. They are also known as refractory clergy, priests, and bishops (Forrest 2013).

the lawless, the reign of terror, and the ultimate revolutionary product of military despotism, i.e., Napoleonic dictatorship. Burke made a spectacular resistance against the new mentioned brand of liberty. Relevantly, he connected the revolutionary sense of hatred against religion to the immoral position of perpetrators. By insisting on the recognition of the rights of the Roman Catholic Church in France, he stood against all the other violations in the same heartless manner (Turner 2003, p. xviii).

Speaking about the actual situation of 1788, Burke was serious in theory and practice to confront French affairs. In other words, Burke's struggle with the French ideology is an ideology, in itself, and there is no escape from a kind of ideology, i.e., a fixed standpoint and a minimum of certain beliefs on the state of affairs. Although, some scholars like Klunker (2016), with adherence to the presumably theoretical coherency of Burke, profess a more relativistic or precisely an anti-ideological narration of Burke's conservative philosophy, with emphasis on his particularism. However, as is discussed in section 1.1.2, *non-relativistic conservatism* is more likely to be able to picture Burke's philosophy comprehensively. On the contrary, Lock (2006) believes that Burke is not vigorously relativist, but his particularism is prone to distinguish temporal and geographical differences that are equivalent to a kind of relativism. Nevertheless, Burke was against the French revolution, but he was not against the counter-revolution in France in favor of the restoration of the Ancien Régime. He tried to justify "interference in the internal affairs of France to end 'a system of anarchy' as 'essential to the security and repose of other powers.'" Burke, therefore, demanded a crusade or holy war to restore the old order in France" (Lock 2006, p. 454).

While Burke discredits the metaphysical presuppositions of the Enlightenment, he, himself, believes in the ontological foundation of the nature of society, human and political power. He introduces the Glorious Revolution in 1688, as the real example of constructive reformation against the French Revolution. Observing the brutal process of the French alterations, Burke (2003) rejected any similarity between the French Revolution and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. While French people deny to reform laws under the fixed constitution and "strike out totally a new constitution" to maintain "a state of unbounded power for undefined and undefinable purposes," Burke stands on the British political tradition as the integral way of being loyal to both stability and reform. On the opposite, he asserted, that the new French constitution "is the very reverse of ours in its principle" (p. 159) and that "We had in fact no revolution, nor did we obtain a new constitution" (Lock 2006, p. 256). Burke's interpretation of 1688 represents it as a constructive change and continuous reform under the name of the revolution.

The British tradition must be the pattern of Europe because it has combined freedom with justice in the frame of an ancient political constitution. His support of hereditary monarchy and British constitutionalism is related to his reflections on culture and ancient manners. His criticism of the conduct of revolutionaries includes a kind of political insight which applies moral and aesthetic principles in harmony with the nature of politics and concrete situations. Burke maintains that a deliberate and conscious loyalty to tradition is the only way to resolve public discontents and to preserve socio-political constitutions. Burke believes in a dynamic tie between religion, freedom, and politics. Religion is the wisdom of piety, asceticism. It consists of the divine attitude to human life. Freedom is the basis of society which has no meaning except destruction and chaos when it brings out political order in the body of the state. Politics is the empirical science of combining liberty with limitation and emerging self-expression in the frame of self-controlling. From this point of view, the theory is a human invention to understand the entity of the truth, which is simultaneously the representation of reality. We live on the inherited ground of our ancestors, and the current perception of right and wrong is a part of the continuous efforts which connect the past to the present and make the future in accord with them.

Maybe it is right to claim that Edmund Burke “became the age’s foremost apologist for aristocracy, hierarchy, and inherited privileges and inequalities” (Lock 2008, p. 26), but he always had a sharp sense of adherence to justice and what he wrote about the importance of “moral imagination” can be considered among his enlightened criticism on some of the dogmas of the enlightenment era. Burke asserted that moral qualities are superior to any metaphysical idea or political theory. He differentiates between moral certainty and rational certainty by putting the standard distinction of French philosophers and their supporters under the question. As it is discussed in section 3.4², his aesthetic analysis of the beauty and the sublime as two phenomena which has different effects on our emotional perception of the world, has a meaningful connection with his analysis of moral imagination and his view of the societal obligation that, in his thoughts, cannot be a mere and only contractual.

His conservative insight along with his philosophical assessment of aestheticism and politics led him to bring a new account about the “mutual obligation” in the society which is part of the greater sense of attachment in what he called

² In section 3.4, the way that the West has dealt with the Shiite theocracy in Iran is criticized within the conceptual framework of Edmund Burke in the *Enquiry* and his analysis of the beautiful and the sublime.

the universal kingdom (Burke 2003, p. 82). The universal kingdom is a superior infinity and an ontological agreement which people, like the English nation, devote their will to that unwritten law with no explicit constitution. In fact, Burke was the authentic man of his own time. His pessimistic vision on the firm abstract definition of human nature is part of the general criticism on the limitations and potentialities of human reason. Edmund Burke is a philosopher of the Enlightenment era, not only because of living in the 18th century but also for some of his most important theoretical assumptions derived from the Enlightenment ideas. Edmund Burke learned from history, literature, politics, and art that human nature has not the same and exact boundaries as the one of rationality. Criticizing some fundamental dogmas of French thinkers and their English supporters does not mean that Burke was against the whole Enlightenment era. The presumptions like the universality of the reason and global equality of human nature were prevalent in his time, but Burke has a different view, and the typical way of philosophical anthropology among his opponents seems unable to bring a convincing account about the human beings as political animals who perceive themselves, at first glance, in terms of their personal and social commitments as a member of a family or a citizen of a land (F. Ferguson 2007). Burke stands in the tradition of skepticism with significant figures like David Hume. Consequently and referring to the most significant political crisis of his own time, he “was so much a man of the Enlightenment that he could so deeply and passionately condemn its distortion into the heady utopianism of the revolutionary era” (Turner 2003, p. xxii). The deeper side of the spirit of the Enlightenment era embodied in Burke’s speculations about the empirical and historical assessment of human civilization and the impossibility of reducing human nature to the only reason.

1.2.1 The Religion and the Politics: Separation and Cooperation

The Necessity of Distinction between Religious Standing and Political Standing

Burke, just like Rousseau, believes that religious authority is an instrument to increase and fix governmental authority. Rousseau (1999) affirms that politics and religion do not have any common purposes and, during the genesis of nations, religion works only as an instrument of politics. The term “civil religion” in the thoughts of Rousseau is still a subject to the academic debate on his intentions and the conceptual scope of the word as he meant. The term “civil religion” seems to be a religion intended to divinize the state. Rousseau at least uses three other labels, i.e., “natural divine right,” “civil or positive divine right,” and “mixed religion.” The latter is a

kind of clerical attempt to usurp the political realm and constitute a semi-theocracy; priests gain a temporal authority for themselves and then undermine the established governmental authority. Rousseau calls it “the religion of the priest” and denies it since it has no place in morality and politics. Although, it is still an open debate on his ambivalent reflections on the role of Christianity in politics, the probable paradoxes in his *Social Contracts* and the possibility to give a consistent interpretation of his theory, “The standard reading of the *Social Contract* is of course that Rousseau *does* offer a civil religion” (Beiner 1993, p. 620). The idea of considering religion as a state institution is ancient and popular among those thinkers who write about the utopia. The invention of religion is vital for their ideal image of the state (Rousseau 1999). By adding the last article of the civil religion as “the sanctity of the social contract and the law,” Rousseau emphasizes the value of civil laws and the significance of civil obedience to sovereignty. The body of political nature needs to have a decisive influence on the people to run the whole land within its framework.

It is the decisions of this higher reason, beyond the scope of average men, that the legislator ascribes to the Immortals, so that those who cannot be moved by human prudence will be led by divine authority. But it does not lie in every man to make the gods speak, nor to be believed when he proclaims himself to be their spokesman. The great soul of the legislator is the true miracle by which his mission is proved. (Rousseau 1999, p. 79)

It is not easy to bring a notable narration of religious reform in the thoughts of Burke. His assertion on the authority of tradition (Dreyer 2013) includes Christian inheritance, is prone to resist reforms in religious beliefs. Regardless of occasional emphasis on the necessity to separate religious pulpits from political sermons, these indications mostly are findings of Burke’s excessive concerns that his homeland being influenced by the French affairs and its British advocates. Ostensibly, Burke (2003) believes that the supportive and innocuous superstition to religiosity is preferable to the detrimental and pernicious superstition, which would undermine the Christian faith. Nevertheless, there are differentiations in his writings between advantageous and disadvantageous kinds of superstitions.

Superstition is the religion of feeble minds; and they must be tolerated in an intermixture of it, in some trifling or some enthusiastic shape or other, else you will deprive weak minds of a resource found necessary to the strongest. The body of all true religion consists, to be sure, in obedience to the will of the Sovereign of the world; in a confidence in his declarations; and in imitation of his perfections. (Burke 2003, p. 135)

Despite Burke's assertion that "superstition operates as a supplement to religion," he seems to be hesitant of advocating the human need of the supplementary bind. Furniss (1993) illustrates that the ambivalent standpoint of Burke to superstitions, "concedes that the beneficial superstition of Catholicism and the beneficial superstition of revolutionary thought are not utterly different from each other but variants which may be either 'auxiliary' or 'prejudicial', 'build' or 'demolish', 'adorn' or 'deform', 'endow' or 'plunder'" (p. 200). In Burkean conciliating approach, the issue of the religion and state is about the kind of balance between them, which is helpful for the commonwealth. In the natural relationship between all parts of the socio-political structure, the legislator could direct the whole system toward any primary priority. It is the skill of true legislation to put the religion in the position of confirming the state and accompanying it (Rousseau 1999). Rousseau mentioned that in ancient times, the political war and the theological war were identical. In other words, there was no distinction between religion and state; each god has its own followers and its own territory. His explanation of the roots of tolerance in paganism is somehow similar to what David Hume wrote in *the natural history of religion*. Hume (1889) also mentioned that the boundaries of the religious interference in the society should take its legitimacy based on being legally established and he attributed it to the Greek vision of founding the city-state which is characterized by a deep sense of community. In fact, the body of citizens is the fundamental ground of any *polis* and the religion was just a brick in this magnificent structure. Similarly, Rousseau (1999) believes that the territories of the gods were legitimate within a national limit and pagan perspective leaves no place for divine jealousy. Therefore, gods were almost in peace with other divine entities and their believers. Lock (2006) illustrates that some of Burke's statements "can be interpreted as evidence that he viewed religion as no more than an instrument of social order and control. Yet the many incidental expressions of faith in private letters to family and friends suggest sincerely held religious convictions" (p. 491). In this matter, Burke's view on religion is not the same as Rousseau or Hume and is not thoroughly instrumental.

Yet politics and the pulpit are terms that have little agreement. No sound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of Christian charity. The cause of civil liberty and civil government gains as little as that of religion by this confusion of duties. Those who quit their proper character, to assume what does not belong to them, are ... ignorant both of the character they leave, and of the character they assume. Wholly unacquainted with the world ... and inexperienced in all its affairs ... they have nothing of politics but the passions they excite ... church is a place ... ought to be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind. (Burke 2003, p. 10)

Burke (2003) explicitly restates that we must protect the noble standing of religion and its independence. He sharply criticized *the political sermons* of the lecturers in the Old Jewry and peculiarly Richard Price³ who was among the famous nonconformist⁴ preachers in Great Britain. Satirically, he ridicules the usage of their speeches and denying that one could find any kind of *moderation* in them. While English priests, in their blatant, passionate, and emotional pulpits, supporting French Revolution, Burke advises that incorporating the duties of church and state are essentially noxious and fails both of them to reach their goals.

The Pervasive and Extensive Role of Religion

Burke (2003) affirms that the sovereigns must secure the aristocratic dignity of religion and along with, they must help poor people. On his view, if the teachers of religion do not communicate with legislators and politicians, then they will not have any authority over powerful old men and new fortunate persons. The profound influence of religious men on their society is conditional, and it works if, and only they maintain a unique, contiguous relation with political men. He believes that poverty was not voluntary and “great freedom, and firmness, and even a dignity” is obtained only by no wants. Therefore, “that disrespect, which attends upon all lay poverty, will not depart from the ecclesiastical” (p. 87). The government should respect the financial freedom of the church, its property, and the way that priests spend money in the way of Christian benevolence. The British clerical establishment never wants to crush the acquired personal nobility within priests and others from the ecclesiastical grades. He asserted that all they earned is only the gift of their learning, piety, and virtue. Because of all these reasons, the people of England cherish their ecclesiastical property and the incomes of priests.

For these reasons, whilst we provide first for the poor, and with a parental solicitude, we have not relegated religion (like something we were ashamed to show) to obscure municipalities or rustic villages. No! we will have her to exalt her mitred front in courts and parliaments. We will have her mixed throughout the whole mass of life, and blended with all the classes of society. (Burke 2003, p. 87)

³ Richard Price (1723–1791) was a remarkable radical political Protestant Dissenter whom Burke addressed in many phrases of the *Reflections*. He was an English Unitarian Dissenter and so respectable in his religious community.

⁴ *Nonconformists* are the Protestant Christians who do not believe in the superiority and authority of the established Church of England. Burke always criticizes their pretentious independence from the official Christian institution. His political conservatism was against their departure from the main root of the Christian faith in his homeland.

The British people never have a sense of hatred when an archbishop precedes a duke in the societal hierarchy. They also accept and revere the deep relation between aristocracy and religion. Moreover, they prefer to be optimistic on ecclesiastical free will and the church revenues to be spent in religious charities, than to stop the religious establishment from its own financial sources and destroy a precious inheritance because of a resistant suspiciousness.

It is better to cherish virtue and humanity, by leaving much to free will, even with some loss to the object, than to attempt to make men mere machines and instruments of a political benevolence. The world on the whole will gain by a liberty, without which virtue cannot exist. (Burke 2003, p. 88)

Many elements of which he defined as the “natural aristocracy” are observable within the ecclesiastical system of Great Britain. Since Burke (2003) believes in the extensive and vital role of religion in society and politics, he considers governmental protection of official, state religion as a basic policy. In his viewpoint, religion is precious, valuable, ancient, and hereditary property of the people of England, just like their laws, rights, and liberties (p. 28).

The Role of Religion in Reformation of State and Empowerment of its Authority

For Burke (2003), the Law is a reality and phenomenon that only belongs to the state; the law is the central character of the state, and the state is constitutional and has a lawful power and legal authority. For him, religious directives are not something that we can call law, but they are wisdom or maxim, and for that reason, they are influential and powerful to purify politics and to bound people and sovereigns to act only within the framework of law and the English constitution; this is the only operation and essential function of religion (p. 85). In this direction, he refers to the monastic institutions and their vital role to give power to the political virtues.

In the monastic institutions, in my opinion, was found a great power for the mechanism of politic benevolence [*sic*]. There were revenues with a public direction; there were men wholly set apart and dedicated to public purposes, without any other than public ties and public principles; men without the possibility of converting the estate of the community into a private fortune; men denied to self-interests, whose avarice is for some community; men to whom personal poverty is honour, and implicit obedience stands in the place of freedom. In vain shall a man look to the possibility of making such things when he wants them. The winds blow as they list. (Burke 2003, pp. 134, 135)

Regarding British history, monasteries had always been a part of the irradiated powerful monarchy, later became also constitutional, throughout Great Britain in the medieval time. Monarchs, the aristocratic class, and the ecclesiastical establishment together founded monasteries for different grounds. In this matter, the socio-political function of the monastery was like an interrelated balance and mutual control between the papacy and the king. Sometimes monks were involved in a political crisis and sometimes a critical conflict between the monarch and the pope was commuted by mutual service and interaction between the royal power and the religious authority (Steane 2004).

Accordingly, Burke asserts that the monastic institution in Great Britain has a steady tie to the religious sensation and is created by humanistic enthusiasm. As Burke points out, the function of mentioned institutions was only to serve the wisdom, which is their creator. In this matter, the purpose of French revolutionaries in closing and destroying the monastic institutions, blocking the church properties, and making priests wholly dependent on the new political power, was likely to ruin any natural and social mechanism for reforming and criticizing the revolutionary power. They terrified priests to swear for the loyalty of the new official church and be servile and subservient members of it. Accordingly, confiscating the ecclesiastical property was a part of the plan to make them thoroughly dependent on the new revolutionary power (Mignet 2006, p. 102). Burke (2003) blames them because they use citizens for revolutionary ends by “converting monks into pensioners” (p. 134). He critiqued immoral manners and irreligious opinions of French revolutionaries. Burke believes that while “all other nations have begun the fabric of a new government, or the reformation of an old, by establishing originally, or by enforcing with greater exactness, some rites or other of religion,” the French people act reversely and “prostitute their virtues” (p. 32). In Burke’s belief, destroying religious institutions and ruining royal authority leads to criminal acts and antireligious aggressions.

1.2.2 The Church and the State in Modern World

The Role of the Church in the Progression of Modern World

Burke believes that ancientness and reformability of church, firm, and open establishment of ecclesiastical institutions and conservation of the knowledge of ancestors have an undeniable and efficacious role in the progression of the European civilization and formation of the Modern world. Specifically, he finds no alteration for the Christian heritage that is dedicated to his people since the fourteenth and fifteenth century; England is persistent in maintaining it and adhering to the valuation of the old ecclesiastical teachings, modes, and institutions. He encourages his nation to be

a tenacious advocate of religion, and he analyses the French Revolution based on its artificial human rights which made the revolutionaries unable to recognize the historical benefits that the whole of Europe takes from Christianity.

We found these old institutions ... without altering the ground. We thought that they were capable of receiving and meliorating, and above all of preserving, the accessions of science and literature, as the order of Providence should successively produce them. And after all, with this Gothic and monkish education ... we may put in our claim to as ample and as early a share in all the improvements in science, in arts, and in literature, which have illuminated and adorned the modern world, as any other nation in Europe: we think one main cause of this improvement was our not despising the patrimony of knowledge which was left us by our forefathers. (Burke 2003, p. 85)

In this part, Burke, in one meaning, refers to “the sacred ecclesiastical science” and its importance in growing Europe in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and New Era.⁵ He always refers to the Christian roots of European civilization and expects the leaders and noble people of the continent to be loyal to the religious foundations of their socio-political order. Eventually, Burke asserted that any departure from antiquity causes the great loss in morality and discipline of the Europeans. The liability of the religious institutions is examined historically, and the desired separation, which is the goal of the revolutionary syndrome in Europe will lead to weakening the whole continental heritage.

The Essential Unity of State and Church

There is a long precedent of confictions and cooperations between the British kingship and the Christian ecclesiastical establishment. “God’s law that the king was the head of the church” was not represented inner competitions between monarchy and Christianity. For example, debates about whether “the commonwealth must be made to agree with the church” or whether “Christian princes had authority ‘in deciding of matters of religion, even in the chief and principal points’” (Cromartie 2006, pp. 76, 136, 137). Relevantly, St Christopher German (1460–1540) believes that “all power is secular” (O’Day 2010, p. 64) and simultaneously articulates that the British monarch and the Church both are binding to each other.

This royal power was limited, however, for he was not entitled ‘to take upon him any authority that our Lord gave only to his apostles or disciples in spiritual ministration to the people’. But even spiritual ministration did not escape the monarch’s supervision. He had responsibilities arising from his duty to do justice. (Cromartie 2006, p. 76)

⁵ In this matter, it is necessary and will be useful to lighten the difference between traditionalism and conservatism in their common indication to “sacred knowledge.”

According to Burke, a “religious and national establishment” is not only legal but also is the foundation and resource of the legality of any other governmental establishment. The principles of sovereignty without the ecclesiastical institution are not legal at all. He saw the church as the basis of the whole English constitution and in an unbroken connection with any parts of it, so far that the people of England cannot imagine the state without the church or vice versa. This unique unity is the inheritance of the social-traditional order of the Middle Ages, and he faithfully attempts to stand upon the process of separation between church and state in the Enlightenment world. Burke claims that his standpoint is a general benediction in England from ancient times to this moment; there is a national admiration of the idea that church and state have a merited and reasonable tie to each other. Although, the revolutionary ideology devalued this mutual association as a disapprobation. The moral framework of the revolutionaries, which was immoral for Burke, could not approve the moral grounds of the religious institutions.

It is on some such principles that the majority of the people of England, far from thinking a religious national establishment unlawful, hardly think it lawful to be without one. ... This principle runs through the whole system of their polity. They do not consider their church establishment as convenient, but as essential to their state; not as a thing heterogeneous and separable; something added for accommodation; what they may either keep or lay aside, according to their temporary ideas of convenience. They consider it as the foundation of their whole constitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indissoluble union. Church and state are ideas inseparable in their minds, and scarcely is the one ever mentioned without mentioning the other. (Burke 2003, p. 84)

Therefore, the national connection between state and church has vital importance. The position and functional area of both are distinctive and different. Therefore, each of them must serve in their unique standing and do their specific duties. The domination of each one on another leads to nothing, but the fall of both, and this double ruin has horrible consequences for the nation. Burke blames the English revolutionaries for their levity; they are entirely preparing to lead their country to the worst calamity.

Something they must destroy, or they seem to themselves to exist for no purpose. One set is for destroying the civil power through the ecclesiastical; another, for demolishing the ecclesiastic through the civil. They are aware that the worst consequences might happen to the public in accomplishing this double ruin of church and state; but they are so heated with their theories, that they give more than hints, that this ruin, with all the mischiefs that must lead to it and attend it, and which to themselves appear quite certain, would not be unacceptable to them, or very remote from their wishes. (Burke 2003, pp. 48, 49)

To understand his criticism of the revolutionary dogmas, he quoted a sentence from one of the English supporters of the French Revolution and pointed him as “a man amongst them of great authority.” The man⁶ in his passionate pulpit shows his willingness for the desired fall of the “civil powers” yet even as a necessary preparation to the collapse of “the most unnatural alliance” that is the cooperation of church and state in Great Britain. The man believed that calamitous and unfortunate affairs are a normal part of the political world and no one should take them as a subject of lamentation, especially when the effect of that fall and collapse is so desirable. In this sense and from Burke’s standpoint, the Revolution against the French monarchy is the ideology of destruction without any knowledge to construct something in replace of the vanished body politic; their passion to get rid of the current social order is more than their preparation to build a new one.

The Necessity of Financial Independence of Church from State

The priests, who entirely dependent on the government, are harmful to liberty and public peace. In Burke’s view, the financial independence of the church from the state has both religious and legal necessity. The Christian and Constitutional motives of the English people are stopping the process of making the ecclesiastical clergy to the employees of the state. Notwithstanding, the revolutionary process in the neighboring country is thoroughly opposite of what Burke wished for the French people. They made clerics as servants to the Revolution and confiscated many of the church properties in the name of equality and freedom (Haydon 2007). Nonetheless, He was seeing that many politicians and clergymen in Great Britain become sympathetic to the Revolution’s ideals.

On 12 July 1790, the Constituent Assembly promulgated the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, entirely reorganizing the church in France. The rationalization of *curés*’ and *vicaires*’ salaries pointed the way to a similar reform in England, where inequalities of benefices’ values and widespread clerical poverty were so baneful. (Haydon 2007, p. 73)

The revolutionaries’ policies in France were vague and undetermined. They could not draw a reasonable principle to form a practical and implicit relationship between the new government and the church establishment. The revolutionary wishful thinking did not let the society run a public debate on the boundaries of the government authority to redefine the ecclesiastical legitimacy, church’s properties, and priest’s stipends. As the comparison between France and Britain at that time, it is notable

⁶ Burke refers in the footnotes of the *Reflections* to Joseph Priestley’s 1782 *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*.

to mention one case with the different result in two countries; the British Dissenters naturally commended the Constituent Assembly's resolution of December 1789 that Protestants from now on could run their own public office. French affairs were more favorable for those who were supporting the relief of the religious minorities at home. On the contrary, the British Parliament rejected the Dissenters' demands for civil equality in 1787 (Haydon 2007). Burke (2003), himself, was a loyal Protestant, but he strongly opposed the radical political Protestant Dissenters and was suspicious of their demands to harm the whole British monarchy.

Burke's political philosophy has an undeniable tendency to defend existing institutions vigorously. He always warned of changing the whole current order and replacing something unknown and unplanned. His warning includes all the historical institutions such as the constitutional monarchy, the church establishment, and the national and international policies. The term "reformation" in his thoughts means only constructing, lasting, and stabilizing processes to make the function of the body politic better and more beneficial. The contribution of individuals in the political process could be useful only through the commonwealth as a natural and living organ. Otherwise, any interference of the people in the sovereignty and the managing of any society will be "unsteady and precarious." Burke unmasked the difficulties which revolutionaries brought to their own country in the name of politics. He denied the political attribution to these difficulties. It is just a pseudo-political entity, Burke believes, and one can find its roots in the human vices like improvidence, carelessness, and greed of politicians.

The English nation ... certainly never have suffered, and never will suffer, the fixed estate of the church to be converted into a pension, to depend on the treasury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps to be extinguished, by fiscal difficulties ... The people of England think that they have constitutional motives, as well as religious, against any project of turning their independent clergy into ecclesiastical pensioners of state. They tremble for their liberty, from the influence of a clergy dependent on the crown; they tremble for the public tranquillity from the disorders of a factious clergy, if it were made to depend upon any other than the crown. They therefore made their church, like their king and their nobility, independent. (Burke 2003, pp. 85, 86)

In general, Burke supports the independent ecclesiastical property with the control of the king. He emphasizes that the royalty system of England when founding goods of the church as legal property, was sensible for the amount of these finances and aware of treacheries that committed against this property. Burke (2003) assures that while the supreme authority of England political system "has the full, sovereign superintendence over this, as over all property," it prevents every kind of abuse; and, "whenever it notably deviates, gives to it a direction agreeable to the purposes of its institution" (p. 88). So, it is necessary to consider the ecclesiastical property as a

private one and protect it from any governmental blocking. Burke indicates that the incorporation and identification of “the estate of the church with the mass of *private property*” is the result of “the united considerations of religion and constitutional policy” which put the state only in the position of guarding and regulating. Therefore, there is no right for the state of being proprietor “either for use of dominion.” In this sense, the provision of the ecclesiastical establishment “might be as stable as the earth on which it stands” (p. 86).

1.2.3 The Religious Movements and the State

Burke was pessimistic on dissident religious movements. He wishes the realization of an official and national religious unity. Therefore, Burke (2003) considers diversity and plenty of religious tendencies as a sign of social divergence and “the new evangelists” as a serious threat to society and state (p. 12). The rival religious movements for the official church, as one of the protecting bases of power, are the roots of political inconstancy.

If the noble *Seekers* should find nothing to satisfy their pious fancies in the old staple of the national church, or in all the rich variety to be found in the well-assorted warehouses of the dissenting congregations, Dr. Price advises them to improve upon nonconformity; and to set up, each of them, a separate meeting-house upon his own particular principles. It is somewhat remarkable that this reverend divine should be so earnest for setting up new churches, and so perfectly indifferent concerning the doctrine which may be taught in them. His zeal is of a curious character. It is not for the propagation of his own opinions, but of any opinions. It is not for the diffusion of truth, but for the spreading of contradiction. (Burke 2003, p. 11)

Their mischievous approach and harmful role toward social solidarity are attested by their recent commemoration of the French chaos and their wishes to happen the same revolution in Great Britain. It seems that the independent religious position with a combination of the revolutionary sense in politics led Burke to confront the British Dissidents. The stability of the political order is his main concern and his priority. As Avoidance from the misunderstanding of Burke’s counterrevolutionary attitude⁷, it is useful to mention that the Burkean concept of stability is hand in hand with constitutional power. The organic unity and

⁷ As Furniss (1993) illustrates, there is a wide spectrum of different meanings from the same words which were coined mostly for a certain notion. “Revolution and reform become ‘inflexions’ of each other and confound Burke’s attempt to divide the ‘preserving’ from the ‘destroying’ concept of revolution.” For example, the British opponents of Burke like

the political stability are in close and essential association with the historical rights of the citizens and the lawful freedom which they have as the ancestral inheritance. Burke (2003) admits the novelty of their revolutionary idea and simultaneously cautions in part against its danger. The whole discourse is not dangerous, but it has some essential and deep-rooted elements capable of destroying any benevolent order. In the direction of political support for historical and official religion, Burke critiques the weightiness of religious claims and rejects *rationalizing religion* in dissenting religious propensities.

I should only stipulate that these new Mess-Johns in robes and coronets should keep some sort of bounds in the democratic and levelling principles which are expected from their titled pulpits. The new evangelists will, I dare say, disappoint the hopes that are conceived of them. They will not become, literally as well as figuratively, polemic divines, nor be disposed so to drill their congregations, that they may, as in former blessed times, preach their doctrines to regiments of dragoons and corps of infantry and artillery. Such arrangements, however favourable to the cause of compulsory freedom, civil and religious, may not be equally conducive to the national tranquility. These few restrictions I hope are no great stretches of intolerance, no very violent exertions of despotism. (Burke 2003, pp. 11, 12)

He also shows his great doubt that the womb of Christianity can give birth to all their abstract and ideal expectations. He considers these opinions as nothing but new entertainments for a tired society that usual pleasures do not satisfy it anymore, and by using this analogy, Burke disdains them. He also devalues them from a thinking position and recognizes the function of their political pulpits as diversifying the amusements of the town. Their preaching profession has nothing to do with politics, and the content of their sermons is far from the knowledge. In Burkean thought, it does not matter to be a dissident. The important is that a man is dissident “from whom or from what.” Therefore, being a religious opposition has no merit in itself. The standpoint of the Dissidents in England is the thing that requires a radical criticism on their revolutionary radicalism. Burke (2003) makes a resemblance between a dry garden and their detrimental view and sees all their sermons as something to beautify their unfruitful land of ideas (p. 11). Burke believes that the deed of priests who tell and propagate these democratic and egalitarian teachings is destructive, and he restates that they do not have the essential qualification for doing their duties in society. Their noisy pulpits

Thomas Paine sometimes used the “counter-revolution” to describe the very revolutionary affairs in France. Paine observed the French Revolution as a counterrevolution “which recovers those rights lost in the revolutionary conquests which established aristocratic governments” (p. 214).

are teaching the principle of demolition. With all these considerations, Burke believes that the popularity and reputation of dissenting religious movements are dangerous and harmful for national security and political stability. The conflict between Burke and Dissidents arose within the framework of the patriotic obligation. British conservatism devoted itself to keep safe the homeland from the French disease, and the Dissidents were considered as the disease vectors.

1.2.4 The Necessity of Political Consecration

Constructing Divine Human and Transcendence of Sovereigns

Burke considers the Church as the basis of beliefs in British history. This basis causes the harmony between the conduct of persons and the ancient, continuous understanding of mankind. This understanding builds the constitution of monarchy and maintains the sanctity of it and all levels of sovereignty. In this regard, the place of government, just like a *sacred temple*, must be pure from all stains. Burke believes that governors sit in place of gods and giving sanctity to them caused that they have a deep vision and eternal hope. Therefore, they will not be deceived by unstable, unworthy affairs. As the result of this sanctification, they make permanent nature and hereditary glory as the main pattern of all their actions. The majestic dignity of the British monarchical system, like a prudent possessor and a wise architect, preserves the sovereignty from “profanation and ruin.” Burke uses a religious analogy to make a similarity between a sacred temple and a body politic; both ought to be purified from any sinfulness like fraud, violence, injustice, and tyranny. That is why he insists on consecrating the commonwealth “solemnly and forever.” He indicates that prejudices are not refutable and are an inevitable and also vital part of human existence. Accordingly, he introduces church establishment as the first of British prejudices. In this sense, prejudice is not void of reason, but it includes vast knowledge, deep insight, and ancient wisdom.

Taking ground on that religious system, of which we are now in possession, we continue to act on the early received and uniformly continued sense of mankind. ... This consecration is made, that all who administer in the government of men, in which they stand in the person of God himself, should have high and worthy notions of their function and destination; that their hope should be full of immortality; that they should not look to the paltry pelf of the moment, nor to the temporary and transient praise of the vulgar, but to a solid, permanent existence, in the permanent part of their nature, and to a permanent fame and glory, in the example they leave as a rich inheritance to the world. (Burke 2003, pp. 78, 79)

Therefore, educating and transcending sovereigns is the only function of religion and ecclesiastical establishments. For Burke (2003), each social and political institution is made for constructing people and educating citizens. He seeks a *pure human*. Therefore, if one wants to reign on others, he must be the wisest and the perfect person. Burke named all the mentioned beliefs on the British ecclesiastical institutions as “sublime principles.” In fact, his conservatism is well connected to traditionalism. The sovereign must be a person of “exalted situation.” He needs to be revived and enforced by religious establishments. As he put humans over any institutions and at the same time insists that institutions have founded by common sense, Burke pursues his argument to prove that all moral, civil, and political institutions are “the rational and natural ties” that aid to connect the human understanding to the divine origin and to build up the holy structure of “Man” as the great representation of God with a sublime place in the creation. In this sense, it is groundless and irrational to deny the religious establishment as a part of the “universal kingdom.” Following his line of justification, the constitutional monarchy is a representation of the divine kingdom on the earth but, and it is vital, without importing any heavenly omnipotence to the body politic.

Burke profoundly believes in the divine roots of human beings. His traditional ontology has an accountable influence on his political philosophy. Nevertheless, we cannot consider him as a theorist within the framework of political theology. Burke never used religion or Christian theology as an instrument to justify the current political structure or to form a political order only based on them. In his thoughts, each element of the European ancestral inheritance should stand in its own place in a way that all the foundations can shape sovereignty as one and united body. Burke (2003) combined the idea of secular sovereignty with the double-foundation of the European monarchy, i.e., the court of a monarch and the ecclesiastical establishment. His insisting on the independence of each of them and simultaneously supporting the benevolent cooperation between them is understandable through his priority to preserve the collective goods through the British political system (p. 86). Burke’s constitutional politics is not even ideological, and accordingly, it is far from a form of political theology or any political ideology based on a specific theology.

The state, as a transfiguration of God’s will, has an essential role in transcending civil society and perfecting humans. The citizens of English sovereignty will never call a legal power into question because they know that their divine providence has decreed to trust the government, and they need not be ashamed to rely on it. While they believe in the state, they have acted in harmony with the universal order. The Belief of the state as a manifestation of God is based on the nature of mankind. Without the divine unification of humans in the frame of state, no one can achieve

his natural perfection. For, bringing a person into being and educating him is only accessible in civil society that, in its turn, is connected with the state.

These, my dear Sir, are, were, and, I think, long will be, the sentiments⁸ of not the least learned and reflecting part of this kingdom ... They all know or feel this great ancient truth: “Quod illi principi et præpotenti Deo qui omnem hunc mundum regit, nihil eorum quæ quidem fiant in terris acceptius quam concilia et coetus hominum jure sociati quæ civitates appelluntur.”⁹ ... they think themselves bound, not only as individuals in the sanctuary of the heart, or as congregated in that personal capacity, to renew the memory of their high origin and cast; but also in their corporate character to perform their national homage to the institutor, and author, and protector of civil society. (Burke 2003, p. 83)

The state is a gift of the divine entity to the human beings in order to achieve personal and social perfection through contingent improvements of their body politic as “reformation.” In Burke’s thought, God makes virtue the helper of human nature. Relevantly, *divine will* has belonged to the state, and God wants the connection between state and divinity. In this meaning, the state is one of the epiphanies of God’s creation and is worth being the subject of praise and worship.

They conceive that He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue, willed also the necessary means of its perfection.—He willed therefore the state—He willed its connexion with the source and original archetype of all perfection ... which is the law of laws, and the sovereign of sovereigns ... that this our recognition of a signiory paramount, I had almost said this oblation of the state itself, as a worthy offering on the high altar of universal praise, should be performed as all public, solemn acts are performed, in buildings, in music, in decoration, in speech, in the dignity of persons, according to the customs of mankind, taught by their nature. (Burke 2003, pp. 83, 84)

Ultimately, state as a bounty of God is “the public ornament” and “the public consolation,” which nourishes the public hope. In this situation, the wealthy individuals at every moment make “the man of humble rank and fortune sensible” of his inferiority. Applying national wealth to the construct of government and its sanctity, all

⁸ Burke means the rational sentiments that reduce the state to the financial deal or commercial contract that can be revoked based on the will or interest of each participant. However, the state is raised from an eternal convention and has an ontological characteristic. In this perspective, the state has a historical comprehensiveness that includes all generations in the past, present, and future.

⁹ As Burke illustrates in the footnotes, the quotation belongs to Cicero’s *De republica* and it means “To that supreme god who rules the universe nothing (or at least nothing that happens on earth) is more welcome than those companies and communities of people linked together by justice that are called states.”

are a benefit for poor people. For, its purpose is transcending all members of society and also raising the nature of “the man in humble life.” However, when he will be equal by nature and may be more than equal by virtue, the sanctified state makes him anxious and aware of a condition “in which the privileges of opulence will cease.” Therefore, both rich and poor find their merit and dignity in the sanctified government (Burke 2003, p. 84).

The Popular and Public Fidelity to the Sovereign

Burke’s defense of giving sanctity to the government is nothing but making civil laws equal to natural rules. Rousseau (1999) expresses that the submission of ancient society to the rules is the main purpose of giving sanctity to the government by ancestors. Similarly, the legislators gave their message through the voice of gods and “immortals” to rule the society by the power of the heavens. In the same way, Burke wants to constitute the state of society based on eternal sanctity and represent the creator of nature as the creator of the constitutional state. Burke’s steady persistence on the united essence of both nature and state is related to his belief that we have only one being who creates the universe and the constitution. In the terminology of Rousseau’s philosophy, he makes the divine authority as the perennial and sacred source of the authority of government and bases the latter on the ground of the first. The reason for choosing this attitude is also similar between Rousseau and Burke, i.e., the necessity of making people loyal to social laws with the help of divinity. Sovereigns are always subjected to murder or betrayal from their near families, trustworthy servants, and rebels. Therefore, the fundamental importance of the sanctity of government is to justify public loyalty to sovereigns. However, where *popular authority* is absolute and unrestrained, then people have unlimited power.

The consecration of the state, by a state religious establishment, is necessary also to operate with a wholesome awe upon free citizens; because, in order to secure their freedom, they must enjoy some determinate portion of power. To them therefore a religion connected with the state, and with their duty towards it, becomes even more necessary than in such societies, where the people, by the terms of their subjection, are confined to private sentiments, and the management of their own family concerns. All persons possessing any portion of power ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with an idea that they act in trust: and that they are to account for their conduct in that trust to the one great Master, Author, and Founder of society. This principle ought even to be more strongly impressed upon the minds of those who compose the collective sovereignty, than upon those of single princes. (Burke 2003, p. 79)

In collective sovereignty, the authority is not for the king but belongs to the mass. Burke (2003), with his pessimism about mass power and unguided will of the people, describes them as they have no authenticity in their political behavior; “they are themselves, in a great measure, their own instruments. They are nearer to their objects” (p. 79). Moreover, the mass in comparison with the king has none of the inner controls, such as *the sense of fame and estimation* to actualize the possibility of acting with more imprudence and less ungovernability. In other words, the autocracy is more probable to be controlled by constitutional pressure, while the public power is more likely of inability to be governed or controlled. Burke believes that the reformation of an unlimited power which is possessed by one person is easier to build a new form of the body politic by an unformed body of the people. In these sections, we see the main reason for Burke’s dread of democracy or from the popular perception of democratic values in the time of the French Revolution.

The share of infamy, that is likely to fall to the lot of each individual in public acts, is small indeed; the operation of opinion being in the inverse ratio to the number of those who abuse power. Their own approbation of their own acts has to them the appearance of a public judgment in their favour. A perfect democracy is therefore the most shameless thing in the world. As it is the most shameless, it is also the most fearless. No man apprehends in his person that he can be made subject to punishment. Certainly the people at large never ought: for as all punishments are for example towards the conservation of the people at large, the people at large can never become the subject of punishment by any human hand. (Burke 2003, pp. 79, 80)

Therefore, the considerable point in this phrase is that people ought to be aware of their inferiority to the sovereign. They should not imagine that “their will, any more than that of kings, is the standard of right and wrong” (Burke 2003, p. 80). The people ought to be persuaded that they are little entitled to governing and less qualified to use any arbitrary powers that under *a false show of liberty* to exercise *unnatural inverted domination*. Burke believes that democratic regimes do not want *a complete devotion*, but they demand *an abject submission*, and therefore, the governor of democratic states obey the *occasional will* of the mass inevitably.

thereby, in all those who serve them, all moral principle, all sense of dignity, all use of judgment, and all consistency of character; whilst by the very same process they give themselves up a proper, a suitable, but a most contemptible prey to the servile ambition of popular sycophants, or courtly flatterers. (Burke 2003, p. 80)

In Burke’s political philosophy, all of these reasons show that the democratic regime based on his crucial reliance on the mass has more requirements to the consecration of the state than those which constitute the monistic monarchy. Burke’s pessimism

toward democracy may sound like an awkward attitude nowadays. However, considering his critical time and the unprecedented violence during incidents of the French Revolution makes his point of view more justifiable as a historical and philosophical critique not against the contemporary concept of democracy, but the populism, the sanctifying public idea, and the sense of hatred against nobles and aristocrats as a political motivation. Otherwise, as a person who was always loyal to the principle of constitutionalism, Burke was an honorable defender of the 18th-century Enlightenment values and the rights of citizens in the structure of a constitutional monarchy. However, he warned against any efforts to give sanctity to the mass violence and to promote the simple idea of equality with negligence of the personal merits, confusion the equal basic rights to the equal outcome and equal standpoint in the everlasting societal pyramid, and denial of the traditional orders and the inherited body politic. In this sense, his defense of hereditary rights lays under his defense of justice and liberal political institutions.

Avoiding from Subversive and Deconstructive Reformation

The sanctity of government stops many inconstancies and distempered situations that usually affect political regimes. Burke mentions a list of these devastating consequences that the revolutionary commonwealth of France affected some of them and will soon fall into others. While Burke (2003) was a political philosopher and simultaneously a well-known statesman, the crucial role of laws and the importance of legality in any ruling system attracted his theoretical attention and formed part of his radical critiques against French radicalism. In this regard, the perfectionist revolutionary complacencies of the new rulers in France led to demolish the ancient legal structure in the first place and with the absence of a necessary judicial system, which is in itself “the collected reason of ages” and has derived from “the science of jurisprudence” (p. 81). Subsequently, expected achievements could be nothing more than actual dangers, essential deficiencies, and uncontrolled chaos in the name of liberty and humanity. Therefore, maddeningly destructive motivation to found a thoroughly new political establishment comes partly from the ungratefulness and a kind of absurdist view of the past, any inherited heritage, and the deeds of ancestors which were named by Burke as the consecrated hereditary political order.

Of course no certain laws, establishing invariable grounds of hope and fear, would keep the actions of men in a certain course, or direct them to a certain end ... No principles would be early worked into the habits. As soon as the most able instructor ... in his place in society, he would find everything altered ... ignorant of the true grounds of estimation. Who would insure a tender and delicate sense of honour to beat almost with the first pulses of the heart, when no man could know what would be the test of honour in a nation, continually varying the standard of its coin? No part

of life would retain its acquisitions. Barbarism with regard to science and literature, unskilfulness with regard to arts and manufactures, would infallibly succeed to the want of a steady education and settled principle; and thus the commonwealth itself would, in a few generations, crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality, and at length dispersed to all the winds of heaven. (Burke 2003, pp. 81, 82)

Accordingly, he concludes that the applying of caution, discretion, moderation, circumspection, and prudence to improve defects of the polity, all are results of the sanctity of government. Reformation without asceticism leads to subversion. Ascetic reform is only being possible, when the awe of sanctity of sovereignty makes its existence important and valuable, just like a holy father, in the eyes of the multitude. Instead of trying to picture Burke as a regressive figure of the enlightenment era who always refers people to obey superiors and accept the inheritance of forefathers, there is a more reasonable way to understand his emphasis on the holiness of the government. It concentrates on his grave concerns on radical utopians, philosophical dogmas, and abstract ideas embodied in the French crisis in 1789. His skepticism is understandable without his conservatism. Burke's critical attitude is in favor of preserving the British monarchy and the British constitution after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Surprisingly, he had been famous for his critical attitude toward British monarch and royal ministers (Turner 2003, p. xiii), but after the political hurricane of France, he started to give his best try to represent the most rational possible defense of the constitutional monarchy and the British way of political reform.

To avoid therefore the evils of inconstancy and versatility, ten thousand times worse than those of obstinacy and the blindest prejudice, we have consecrated the state, that no man should approach to look into its defects or corruptions but with due caution; that he should never dream of beginning its reformation by its subversion; that he should approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude. By this wise prejudice we are taught to look with horror on those children of their country, who are prompt rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds, and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their father's life. (Burke 2003, p. 82)

Understanding Edmund Burke or any philosopher whose idea seems unfamiliar in comparison to our modern values, an unavoidable process of maximizing the self-consistency of utterances should be pursued (Goldberg 2004). Avoiding to interpret Burke's philosophy as a religious idea, it is closer to the principle of charity in

hermeneutics,¹⁰ to consider such phrases along with other Burke's thoughts such as his firm reaction of combining religion with politics which exemplified in his time as the mutual interference between the Christian establishment and the royal power. He was also against a pure and radical sanctified monarchic right of the rule as part of its legitimacy. Burke (2003) describes them as "exploded fanatics of slavery" and ridicules their claim that *the crown is held by divine hereditary and indefeasible right* (p. 23). Burke considered these extreme religious monarchists as a partner of the camp of Thomas Paine; one side claim the right to choose the monarch, and the other side claims the divine determination of the throne. In other words, the necessity of political consecration is another articulation of Burke's politics of prudence, which is the only alternative to the politics of perfectionism.

Reverence to the Inheritance of Ancestors

Because of the consecration of power, sovereigns see themselves not as an independent totality but as only one component of the continuous series of the political and hereditary tradition, and they use the most concern and exactness to conserve the inheritance and the commonwealth. Therefore, they are avoiding, with the most caution, any demolition, and destruction of a glorious structure that all future generations have the same, equal right to it. Having respect to the political patterns of ancestors caused that posterity will have the same respect to our present government plans. Therefore, the continuity of a political tradition is being conserved, and a historic nation is being created. Otherwise, the breakthrough of generation and ruin of body politic is the least consequence of disrespect to the ancient manners.

But one of the first and most leading principles on which the commonwealth and the laws are consecrated, ... unmindful of what they have received from their ancestors, or of what is due to their posterity, should act as if they were the entire masters; that they should not think it among their rights to cut off the entail, or commit waste on the inheritance, by destroying at their pleasure the whole original fabric of their society; hazarding to leave to those who come after them a ruin instead of an habitation—and teaching these successors as little to respect their contrivances, as they had themselves respected the institutions of their forefathers. By this unprincipled facility of changing the state as often ... the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken. No one generation could link with the other. (Burke 2003, p. 81)

Thomas Paine (1736–1809), an English-born American political activist, philosopher, and revolutionary, ridiculed his rhetoric in *Reflections* as a "silly waste of

¹⁰ In order to maximize and optimize the unwritten agreement between Burke and his today's readers.

feeling” and explained the French revolution as a struggle “against the whole *principle* of monarchy” not individuals as monarchs. In the same way, Paine claims that “poor Louis himself was a victim of the hereditary principle” (Hitchens 2008, p. 14). In contrary to Paine, a key fact to understand Burke’s conservative philosophy is to perceive the concept of “continuity” in his works. The continuity has a vital tie to the self-imagination of a people as a perennial line of generations. There should be some essential characteristics to make it possible the collective self-perception as the nation with a continuous connection between past, present, and future. He even acknowledged and praised “the temporary solution of continuity” in British history to appoint the most eligible person as the successor of the King James II of England (1633–1701), who was deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. He believes that the best historical and official expression of the Revolution of 1688, should be found in the Declaration of 1689 (or the Bill of Rights) as an embodied British continuity in the form of a historical document. As a legal consequent of the British constructive revolution, The Declaration of Right (the act of the 1st of William and Mary, sess. 2, ch. 2) established the supremacy of Parliament over the Crown and Burke (2003) describes it as “the cornerstone of our constitution, as reinforced, explained, improved, and in its fundamental principles for ever settled” (p. 15). In his view, the very existence of Magna Charta of King John called the “oldest reformation,” is also a part of the hereditary chain bestowed to England by collective endeavors from ancient legislators to the present ones. Burke believes that political tradition has its own inner reformatory mechanism. Accordingly, a mistake in the mentioned historical legislative chain has been always corrected in a cautious and deliberative manner by the posterity, as the old charter is in an organic connection with the late charter from Henry I and both “were nothing more than a re-affirmance of the still more ancient standing law of the kingdom” (pp. 27, 28).

Burke distinguishes between the ‘mere *abstract* competence of the supreme power’ in a state (in Britain, the theoretical omnicompetence of Parliament) and the more limited ‘*moral* competence’ which subjects ‘occasional will to permanent reason’ ... From Magna Charta ... to the Revolution, the English spoke of their ‘most sacred rights and franchises’ as deriving not from some abstract principle but from ‘an *inheritance*’ ... Burke regarded the precise legal provisions of the Bill of Rights, based firmly on ancient practice and judicial precedents, as a stronger safeguard for individual liberties than any appeal to the abstract (and therefore indefinite and unenforceable) ‘rights of man.’ (Lock 2006, p. 311)

As the entire *Reflections* is a unique statement on the nature of man and human history with the main focus on the art of ruling, Burke’s view about the conditions which make the continuity possible is not fictitious or detached from realpolitik.

Therefore, his emphasis on the “ancient constitution” is not like a religious faith or committing self-deception to take a myth as reality. In his conservative philosophy, the idea of the ancient constitution is grounded in history and cannot be reduced to the psychological aspect.

That so many men over so long a period have wanted to make their ‘rights’ an ‘*inheritance*’ shows how much more powerful a sway custom exerts over men’s minds than reason. Reasonings are too variable and individual to trust the preservation of rights to their custody. Custom provides a surer protection. By 1790, the constitution of 1689 was itself venerable. (Lock 2008, p. 151)

The anti-idealist attitude of Burke is not necessarily against his narration of the history or the mechanism of the tradition. The self-reformative characteristic of the tradition, as the socio-political inheritance, has no deterministic elements or a pure intrinsic guarantee for both liberties and security. Humans are the main actors in history, but the experience of constituting a body politic from antiquity till now is also a part of human creations. All the purpose of Burke’s conservative philosophy is to make it clear that any idealistic change in the inherited institutions could lead to chaos and violence. In the same manner, the usage of “sacred rights” in his thoughts does not mean an actual confrontation to what current readers understand as “human rights.” The French significant and brutal change made a new-fashioned way of defining human rights. In comparison to The French Déclaration, all the previous examples like Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights of 1689 and even the American Declaration of Independence, despite all of its innovation to propose universal insights, remained under “the form of a bill of complaint.”

The French Déclaration of 1789, so vilified by Burke, is the foundation document in the modern history of ‘human rights’. Previously, such claims had typically been framed as lists of grievances. The French Déclaration marked a significant innovation. Dropping the complaint mode entirely, it asserts a series of universal ‘rights’ to which not only the French but all humanity are entitled. ... Critics of these documents have charged that they are too abstract and rationalistic, that in seeking to express ‘universal’ rights, they fail to respect differences between cultures, and the different ways in which societies may legitimately conceptualize and protect the ‘rights’ they accord to individuals. (Lock 2006, p. 314)

Burke’s standpoint toward the French invention of rights is different from the contemporary postcolonial analysis, which finds its articulation in the global left, anti-imperialist discourse, and Islamism. They believe that the function of “human rights” is nothing more than the instrument of dominating Western values to make

all other cultures, lands, and especially the Third World as its own servants and obedient. Reversely, The Irish patriotism of Burke has both the national and universal tendency. In this sense, his assertive reference to the tradition, ancestors, ancient heritage, and all other similar terms does not lead to a strict antagonist attitude against universal values. Surprisingly, “human rights” in general is not also immune from mainly anti-democratic nationalism, namely nowadays nativist ideologies and other authoritarian tendencies to build a nation regardless of all the international laws and values. They also denied the universality of some basic rights from a regressive nationalist perspective.¹¹ Emphasizing the national privileges of English people by Burke (2003) has no connection with latter tendencies. Burke made it clear that he is far from denying the *real* rights, both in theory and in practice. His objections against the *pretended* rights and what he called false claims of rights by French revolutionaries. Burke considered “real rights” as a characteristic of a good society, fair laws, and the benevolent commonwealth (Lock 2006). Therefore, his harsh criticism of the state of affairs in France is “far from denying the existence of what are today called human rights” (Lock 2006, p. 317).

The constitutional repair of the body politic and the necessity of continuity are laid in a coherent political philosophy that is also concerned about the rights of citizens and the struggle against despotism. Accordingly, Burke’s position in the time of discontents in America and the scandal of corruption of The East India Company (EIC)¹² and his arguments to justify the demands of Americans to be at

¹¹ Some parts of Europe are now experiencing these kinds of Western nationalism against western universal human rights. The general concerns about rising the new far-right in Europe are also part of the mentioned wave of the new-nationalistic movement. There is an open debate about the relationship between nationalism and anti-imperialism in The Middle East. The whole region was living in the 20th century under the sense of being colonized, even when they are not, still the sense of hatred against the political influence of foreign powers shaped the Middle Eastern nationalist movements. The historical evidence of being colonized or the presence of foreign powers in the region has nothing to do with the mentioned sense of hatred against so-called “the West” or “western allies” as the clear example of xenophobia in the Middle East. The Iranian history of discrimination concerning Jews and Baha’is are the least cultural consequences. On the other side, the still-controversial nationalization of the Iranian oil industry (1951–53), which led to an unresolvable conflict between the Shah and then Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq in the least political consequences.

¹² The East India Company (1600–1874), founded in the time of Queen Elizabeth I to explore the mysteries of the East. The EIC granted a Royal Charter and gained exclusive possession of English trade in the whole of Asia and the Pacific. By mapping trade routes through unchartered and lawless territories, the very adventurous characteristic of the trade gave EIC a chance to create British India, founded Hong Kong, and Singapore. The East India Company developed beyond a purely commercial enterprise when war between Britain and France spread to India in the mid-1740 s. The Company established military supremacy over

least economically independent and the importance to respect the Indians and their cultures prove the consistency of his liberal conservatism. In the late 1780s, Burke (1999a) committed himself to be the leader in defense of the controversial legal document in the House of Commons against Warren Hastings's mismanagement of India under the authority of the East India Company. Although, his policy toward the crisis of the East Indian Company also illustrates Burke's prudence to start with praising the company, then to encourage it to be reformed, and eventually to criticize it for abusing *Indian's natural rights*.

However, Lock believes that the main confrontation with the Human Rights Declaration as an imposed alien code of doubtful universality can be found in the philosophy of Burke and his specific British particularism. Lock believes that The French Déclaration marked a significant innovation by asserting a series of universal 'rights' which is not only belonged to the French but all humanity. Its modern successors, Lock notes, like those declarations by the United Nations, have followed the French pattern in 1799. On the contrary, Burke preferred to be cautious of "attributing indefeasible 'rights' to atomized individuals" and tried to present them "as part of a system of social duties and obligations." Lock asserts that Burke was prone to modify generalized concepts in accord with local and particular circumstances.

His long and intense concern with India forced him to confront the reality of cultural difference not as an armchair anthropologist but as a practical lawgiver. Inclined by temperament to respect such differences, Burke might have become a relativist. Instead, he sought the universal human needs and values that find expression in that cultural diversity. (Lock 2006, p. 314)

Other scholars believe that Burke's attitude toward the Indian crisis requires careful analysis to avoid simplistic conclusions about the transformation of his philosophy. "His perspectives on India contain the full richness and complexity of his overall political and moral thought" (Burke 1999a, p. 18). Nevertheless, his reflections on the problem of India express the rationality of his conservative philosophy to propose

rival European trading companies and local rulers, culminating in 1757 in the seizure of control of the province of Bengal. The war between Britain and France in the mid-1740s expanded The East India Company over just a commercial enterprise. The company built a military unit and made it the supreme branch over European companies and local rulers, which was directly overhead in 1757 by gaining control of the province of Bengal. Further territorial acquisitions in India during the late 18th and early 19th centuries accelerated the function of EIC from mere a trader to a combined political power. The fundamental transformation of the company and the vast concerns about its subverted role and corruption, made the British Parliament confine the EIC's autonomy in order to supervise and control only its administrative and political affairs in 1784.

a fair superiority and a good imperial rule. Similarly, Burke's *Speech on American Taxation*, which was delivered in 1774 suggests a conservative solution for then discontents in American colonies and shows the concerns of liberal conservatism about justice, freedom, and stability. In 1776, Burke greeted the American Declaration of Independence with a more critical attitude about British imperial policy. His remarkable speech about discontents in America "performs two tasks with incomparable force and wit. It recounts the recent history of American- English relations; and it judges the reimposition of taxes to be politically unsound" (Bromwich 2014, p. 211). Burke (1999b) invites British governors to return to the long-standing regulations. Burke tries to persuade the governmental side of the conflict to revert to "the ancient policy" of this kingdom (p. 111). His arguments for solving then discontents in America are based on the necessity of continuity and the authenticity of the economic and political relationship with Americans, which had existed for a long time. In this regard, Burke encourages British officials to rule America only by "laws of trade" and binding their trade is reasonable because Britain had always done it, and it worked. For the same reason, Britain should not tax Americans because it was not an old regular way to bind Americans with collecting tax revenues.

Again, and again, revert to your old principles---seek peace and ensue it---leave America ... to tax herself. I am not here going into the distinctions of rights. ... I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. ... These are the arguments of states and kingdoms. Leave the rest to the schools; for there only they may be discussed with safety. But if, intemperately, unwisely, fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source of government, by urging subtle deductions, and consequences odious to those you govern, from the unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sovereignty, you will teach them by these means to call that sovereignty itself in question. (Burke 1999b, pp. 114, 115)

In his conservative historical vision, the unwritten British constitution is authentic not due to its ancientness, but for its old and fundamental useful functions. "The *Unwritten Law* is thus called, not because it is only transmitted by tradition from generation to generation; but because it is not founded on any known act of the Legislature. It receives its force from immemorial custom" (De Lolme 2007, p. 84). Changing the ancestral manner of ruling without any reformative insight and prudent speculation will weaken the whole body politic and will put it in danger. That is why his full concern to change any "ancient order of things" is primarily about the question of "what is to be done" and it is also the ground of his claim that "the blood and treasure of Europe is wasted for the establishment of Jacobinism"¹³

¹³ Jacobinism refers to a member of a radical society of French revolutionaries that promoted the Reign of Terror and other extreme measures, active mainly from 1789 to 1794.

in France.” In the end, any great change in human affairs will be only “perverse and obstinate” (Burke 1999c, p. 268). The comprehensive characteristic of Burke’s conservatism presents its inclusivity in the political dissensions regarding the crisis in American colonies; he defends the rights of Americans under “the imperial rights of Great Britain.” The ministry of 1768 was hesitant to design a firm and decisive policy toward the political crisis in America and repeatedly altered their moral and political position from colonial to imperial interests and vice versa. In 1774, Burke’s prediction of the future of discontents in America confirmed by the failure of “the coercive policy” of the Rockingham administration¹⁴ and, as an expected consequence, continued American resistance. In his speech, Burke criticized the administrations because they had no consistent and wise look at the totality of the problem and the conditions of reconciliation for conflicts of interests (Bromwich 2014, p. 213). In this matter, Burke justifies the logic of an imperial constitution and explains it as a conservative form of reconciliation. He divides the capacity of the British Parliament as “the local legislature” and what he calls “*imperial character*.” One is the same as the executive power, but he describes the latter as follows:

The other, and I think her nobler capacity, is what I call her *imperial character*; in which, as from the throne of heaven, she superintends all the several inferior legislatures, and guides and controls them all, without annihilating any. As all these provincial legislatures are only coordinate to each other, they ought all to be subordinate to her; else they can neither preserve mutual peace, nor hope for mutual justice, nor effectually afford mutual assistance. It is necessary to coerce the negligent, to restrain the violent, and to aid the weak and deficient, by the over-ruling plenitude of her power. She is never to intrude into the place of the others, whilst they are equal to the common ends of their institution. But in order to enable Parliament to answer all these ends of provident and beneficent superintendence, her powers must be boundless. (Burke 1999b, p. 116)

Burke (1999b) also differentiates between “a competent sovereign power” and an “ordinary power” with the prudent and constitutional conclusion that the first should not be confused with the latter and ought to be never “used in the first instance.” He also makes a distinction between “the constitution of the British Empire” and “the constitution of Britain” and emphasized that “the power of taxing in parliament” must be considered as an “instrument of empire, and not as a means of supply” (p. 116). With all these considerations, the conservative attitude of Burke to defend English history and its continuous monarchic tradition is not necessarily and not

¹⁴ The Rockingham Whigs in 18th century British politics were a faction of the Whigs led by Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, from about 1762 until his death in 1782.

actually against the fundamental rights of human beings. In other words, his English particularism¹⁵ against those alleged French universal values and his British chauvinism against the political aggression of the Enlightenment era does not lead to a political ideology and denial against any universal values.

As evidence to prove Burke's respect for the rights of human beings, "the real rights of men" is one of the favorite terms in *Reflections*. Accordingly, the "sacred rights" is a Burkean term to confront any abstract plan, philosophic dream, or rational purification to define a new kind of human beings as a result of "the very idea of the fabrication of a new government" which is enough to give us the feeling of "disgust and horror" (Burke 2003, p. 27). Conversely, the most apparent evidence of the wrong way of French revolutionary was the unprecedented discontinuity and the irreparable gap between generations which all came out from the revolutionary philosophy. Defending the hereditary political element as a symbol of the continuity, Burke describes the joint sovereignty of England by William III (also widely known as William of Orange 1650–1702) and Mary II (1662–1694) as the "necessity to countenance the idea of hereditary succession." The incident of appointing the Prince of Orange along with his wife Mary, daughter of King James, was not the act of *choice*, but the act of *necessity* namely a legal decision to still adhere to "all genuine principles of jurisprudence." The specialty of the mentioned case¹⁶ in a critical time of England made a "doubtful title of succession" necessary to maintain the spirit of the unwritten constitution¹⁷ of the country for the sake of "peace, quiet and security of the realm," in order to secure the liberties of the people. There was no other choice except to recall deposed King James or to put

¹⁵ Particularism is a political theory that emphasizes the right of each political unit to promote its own interests and specifically independence without regard to the interests of larger units. English particularism, in this case, means loyalty to the political tradition of England along with an adherence to the approved universal values.

¹⁶ To justify it, Burke refers to an important concept of Roman law. *Privilegium non transit in exemplum*: "A privilege does not become a precedent." It means that the incident was unique in the time of necessity and cannot be repeated on all future occasions.

¹⁷ As Blackburn (2015) articulates, there is an open debate on the necessity of a written constitution in contemporary Britain. Great Britain does not have a "codified constitution" that exists normally in many modern states all around the world, in order to determine officially the political structure and the mechanism of its nation-state. Some characteristics of the unwritten British constitution, like conventions, are "the special significance of political customs" and assisting ancient political institutions to maintain their desired functions. Although, the singularity of the British history and politics is the very ancient constructive function of an unwritten constitution and regarding the existence of a great judicial and political treasure formed in many official documents like the Act of Parliament or "law reports of court judgements" which derive from the very British "constitutional nature", there is also a question of a current probable need to set out a written or codified constitution.

the whole land in a bloody war (Burke 2003, pp. 16, 17). Fulfilling the public good, safety, and prosperity of the nation, the honorable British legislators in that time, chose a line of succession which was the nearest to the blood royal of the abdicated king. Actually, the significance of Burke and his different position in the tradition of liberal philosophy is the fundamentality of law regarding human rights. For Burke, discussing human rights is a simultaneous and co-existed issue with the discussion of the “civil society,” legal sovereignty, and just laws.

Burke did not deny the validity of the ‘rights of men’. Indeed, such rights are integral to his philosophy of politics. As a philosopher, he acknowledged their derivation from the natural law. As a statesman, however, he preferred to derive them from positive laws. The value of such enactments as Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights of 1689 was in declaring and recognizing such ‘natural rights’ in a form that made them effective and enforceable. (Lock 2006, p. 316)

In Burke’s opinion as a conservative philosopher, the most vital thing and the first-ever priority is the legal liberty and the historical way to legalize liberties by ancestors in the form of the current social order and the body politic. Similarly, the social and historical existence of human rights is more important than the mere philosophical definition of it. Merle reminds us that the normative approach to human rights has its own controversy concerning a lack of theoretical consensus on the meaning of autonomy, human being, personhood, welfare, and liberty (Departamento de Filosofia—UFSC 2018).

Ironically, the abstraction of liberty and the process of transcending human rights in a dominating gestalt against the sovereignty and the nation-state order is intrinsically against the Burkean acknowledgment of human rights as a lawful agreement between people in both the national and international arena. Relevantly, the significance of Burke in that time is based on his reflections on the meaning of loyalty concerning the civil rights, liberty, legal authority, and the function of the political tradition to maintain the current order as a lawful agreement in the light of loving the country and any patriotic sentiments between generations of all time. Burke represents the government as a kind of extended family or as a ‘permanent body composed of transitory parts,’ in which individuals die, but the whole ancient existence remains in a condition of ‘unchangeable constancy.’ All of his concerns were to provide and keep the conditions that realize the continuity in a legal and historical framework, namely the constitution. Believing in “natural rights” as a part of his adherence to the natural law theory prevents him to join the broad coalition at that time and praise the French Revolution. For, Burke was observing the devastating impact of revolutionary deeds to weaken the main form of conservation both the liberties and justice, which was the monarchic body politic at that time. As Scruton

(2011) indicates, “without reference to some legal tradition, the concept of a natural right is singularly indeterminate, generating now this, now that, set of intuitions about the ‘inalienable’ moral property of the human individual” (p. ix). When the constitution and all the legal documents along with unwritten laws are not efficient and enforceable anymore, then we should expect no more than “madness,” “gross and stupid absurdity” and a compound of “childish futility” (Burke 2018, para. 298).

Surveillance, Accuracy, and Piety in the Transition of Political Power

Burke believes that sacred power leads its owners to transfer the political authority with the most caution and deliberation. Since they regard it not as a simple task but as a holy appointment. In this belief, we can see the roots of his faith in the tradition of *natural law*. As an adherent philosopher to the natural law, Burke expresses his own conservative narration of the “rights of man.”

Burke did not deny the validity of the ‘rights of men’. Indeed, such rights are integral to his philosophy of politics. As a philosopher, he acknowledged their derivation from the natural law. As a statesman, however, he preferred to derive them from positive laws. The value of such enactments as Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights of 1689 was in declaring and recognizing such ‘natural rights’ in a form that made them effective and enforceable. The framers of the Petition of Right of 1628, for example, rejected the ‘theoretic science’ which would have given them merely a ‘vague speculative right’ and ‘exposed their sure inheritance to be scrambled for and torn to pieces by every wild litigious spirit’. Instead, guided by a ‘practical wisdom’, they chose a ‘positive, recorded, *hereditary* title’. Burke defended the value of inherited liberties through characteristic metaphors drawn from the law of property. Inheritance provides ‘a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission; without at all excluding a principle of improvement.’ (Lock 2006, p. 316)

The political power has legitimacy if and only is consistent with the eternal law of morality and justice. He persists in the religious piety of sovereigns in commitment to political prudence and avoidance of becoming a despot. The consecrated state has both wisdom and virtue. In this sense, an inheritance as a body politic in accord with *the universal kingdom* can prevent any tyranny and illegality, which are the main sources of political deviance that leads to a noxious state. In this sense, the universal kingdom is a source of any improvement in the body politic and is also the foundation of the unwritten British constitution as an eternal social contract which is;

A partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born ... linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place. (Burke 2003, p. 82)

In this regard, there is a seeming contradiction between Burke's rejection of the metaphysical interpretation of freedom and his acceptance of a specific metaphysics to explain the nature of the state and the society. Nevertheless, Burke (2003) believes that the sanctified power is an ancestral inheritance to exterminate any possible resemblance to lawless domination, whether this destructive try is supposed to be pursued by civil, ecclesiastical, military forces and body of magistrates. What he named "the spirit of philosophical analogy" treated the state as a kind of extended family (p. 29). In this sense, the power "(which any man may well tremble to give or to receive)" will be conferred only to those who are the representative of virtue and wisdom that simultaneously acknowledges the imperfection as an inevitable part of the human life.

When the people have emptied themselves of all the lust of selfish will, which without religion it is utterly impossible they ever should, when they are conscious that they exercise, and exercise perhaps in a higher link of the order of delegation, the power, which to be legitimate must be according to that eternal, immutable law, in which will and reason are the same, they will be more careful how they place power in base and incapable hands. In their nomination to office, they will not appoint to the exercise of authority, as to a pitiful job, but as to a holy function; not according to their sordid, selfish interest, nor to their wanton caprice, nor to their arbitrary will. (Burke 2003, p. 80)

After all of these preferences and advantages that Burke regards for giving sanctity to the power, we can ask from him that how he conciliate his continual assertion of the fundamental role of morality in politics with the consecrating the political power. From his words on this issue, we can see an inconsistency with two reputed and historic beliefs; *religion as a guarantee of morality* and *religion as a servant of politics*. He believes that the consecration of power and religious duty to the commonwealth is the durable resource of political authority and is the main cause to dignify morality among governors, politicians, and people. Nevertheless, the sacred power is never the veil of the despotism of the king. However, it causes to have to respect the constitution and political system.

1.3 Liberal Conservatism as a Reconciliation of Liberty and Authority

As Scruton (2011) reminds us, there are some fundamental differences between liberalism and conservatism concerning the priority of freedom or authority, individual liberty or expediency of an established government, the meaning of natural rights, and the meaning of tradition. Nevertheless, all the message of the conservative philosophy is that politics is at first and at most an empirical arena with the history of a wide range of experiences and lessons from our ancestors. Accordingly, the purpose of any speculations in politics is to indicate the necessity of body politic, i.e., both state and civil society, as the institutional protection of individual freedom. As Patzelt articulates presumptions concerning the conservative thought, the popular consideration marks conservatism as “right” and therefore “bad,” like its positive label on revolution as “left” and consequently “good” (Bibliothek des Konservatismus 2018). The supposed theoretical conflict between conservatism and liberalism appears in a more contingent way when the conservative rejection of philosophical theorizing is considered along with the characterization of modern political philosophy as the expression of the idea of freedom. On one side, classical liberalism rejects traditional sources of authority (monarchical, aristocratic, religious) as the prerequisite of flourishing liberty. On the other side, classical conservatism opposes abstract, ahistorical, and universal rights which find their formation in the idealization of rights as a liberal concept. Nevertheless, the antagonism between liberal values and conservative principles is also claimed from the standpoint of left-liberalism. Left-liberals consider conservatism as a theory constituted only by patriarchal teachings to support old and hierarchical morality with regressive functions, and conclusively they infer that the fundamental conflict of conservatism with liberalism is inevitable (Lakoff 2016). Conversely, Ahmari describes American conservatism as the defender of individual rights, free enterprise, and pluralism. It emphasizes that liberty depends on public virtue and moral order. In this view, liberty and autonomy should be reconciled with tradition, state authority, and the common good. Ahmari asserts that conservatism and liberalism are branches of each other, the one (conservatism) advocates tradition and virtue and, when necessary, discipline the regime of liberty; the other (liberalism) gives security to the open space “in which churches, volunteer organizations, philanthropic activity, and other sources of tradition and civic virtue flourish, in freedom, rather than through state establishment or patronage” (Ahmari 2017a, para. 23).

Similarly, Burkean conservatism is a way of dynamic combining of liberalism and conservatism; as a political solution to maintain stability and freedom

together. In this sense, the forceful and persuasive nature of power is being controlled by the natural mechanism which is partly inherited from the way of governing by our ancestors and partly reformed in accord with necessary changes in the body politic. Burke indicates the importance of political feelings and public emotions to shape or preserve a body politic. Considering the whole political process as a merely rational and logical phenomenon is among the great mistakes of politicians and policymakers. He made a distinction between eloquence, wisdom, and intelligence. Burke (2003) criticizes the political pulpit from which the French Revolution receives commemoration. The rhetoric of revolutionary British orators could be meaningful and expressive if it simultaneously does not suffer from the lack of contemplativeness and thoughtful aspects. The wise man, in his thoughts, must have prudence necessarily. The wisdom needs reflections and the latter, in its turn, needs patience.

In the conservative tradition, most of the contemplative questions are still the same as Burke, although there come different answers to new problems in the contemporary eruptive era. The constitution of liberty, in the philosophy of Friedrich Hayek (1983), is a prudent process to figure out which kind of constitutional arrangements in terms of a legal procedure, "might be most conducive to the preservation of individual freedom" (p. 3). A similar tradition of skepticism, which Burke always emphasizes and includes the potentiality of human reason or the boundaries of our knowledge, is still in the center of conservative reflections in our time. The constitution of liberty is only possible when we acknowledge our constitutional cognitive limitation. Putting a grave reflective doubt (Hayek 1983, p. 15) on the Enlightenment inheritance to be confident on conquering all the ignorance and occupying the rest of the unknown realm of the universe and hidden parts of nature, is still the main critical role of conservatism.

Liberal Conservatism in Iranian Political History: The Possible Reconciliation in the Past

It becomes clear from the previous parts that conservatism is not equal to tyranny. When political conservatism is perceived as the tyrannical approach in politics, then there would be no need for any research in order to be sure about its existence in the Middle East generally and in Iran particularly. Much more papers have been published during recent centuries on Eastern despotism. The particular aspect of the current research is to focus on applying liberal conservatism in the contemporary history of Iran. As avoidance from a non-academic interpretation, it is more accurate to indicate that the historical facts are not always and in itself speak on their behalf. The perspective of research will make a historical fact to present a part of the reality in the past. Researchers will not and are not allowed to invent a historical reality.

However, the mere facts are mute, and the way of seeing them could enlighten a dark side of a controversial event in our history.

Accordingly, this inquiry tries to find and analyze the conditions, evidence, and examples of the existence of liberal conservatism or, if it is more accurate, right-liberal orientation in Iranian politics before the Islamic Revolution. One more time, by defining, analyzing, and pursuing the roots of liberal conservatism in the history of Iran, not a single case of injustice, discrimination, a violation against human rights, inequality, or any other kind of deviation from democratic standards is going to be justified. Instead, the main theoretical concern of the research is to suggest a model of understanding of the hidden and deep cause of collapsing the entire inheritance of the Constitutional Revolution of 1979.

The first and most influential era is the time and affairs which led to the constructive Constitutional Revolution of 1905. On the next plane, the focus is on the events that led to the rise of the Pahlavi monarchy, and then the whole period of Reza Shah and the early time of Mohammad Reza Shah will be reviewed from a united and coherent perspective which assesses the probable existence of two criteria, i.e., liberal conservatism on one side and religious reformation of the other side. One of the primary purposes of the current thesis is to clarify the significant and fundamental difference between the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and what was going in Iran before the decisive Shiite shift in Iranian political history.

What is Religious Reformation?

2

2.1 Religious Reformation: Concept and History

The first and almost neglected point is that the reformation in these recent centuries means the Christian reformation, not the Islamic one. Paying attention to the mentioned difference between Islamic history and Christian one could prevent many misunderstandings during readings of the history of religious reformations from the 18th century till our contemporary era. In many cases, speaking on the religious reformation are referred to the Judeo-Christian history. The reminding is vital because the popular and incorrect conclusions in the Muslim world come from the premises, which have taken out of the Christian reformation. The invalidity of the Muslim reformist's argument based on the other religious tradition is that Islam and Christianity are dissemblance fundamentally. Therefore, we need to know the very religion which supposed to be reformed based on its own history and principal teachings. Applying the Christian experience to Islam can lead to unsuccessful and useless efforts to reform it. Emphasizing the fundamental difference between Christianity and Islam does not mean that there was no cultural interaction between the Islamic and Christian tradition, which is "one of simultaneous repulsion and fascination" (Darius Shayegan 1997, pp. 18, 19). It includes a wide range of realms like the role of Greek philosophy to develop the early Islamic philosophy and then adapting the thoughts of philosophers in the Muslim world by the medieval philosophy in the West. The two subsequent Abrahamic religions have fundamental similarities in their messianic teachings and expansionist attitudes.

The Twelver Shiite tradition of Iran views the Mahdi as the Twelfth Imam who will return from the occultation he entered during the rule of Abbasid Caliphs. Sunni traditions view the Mahdi not as returning but as appearing for the first time. In both Shiite and Sunni traditions, Jesus and the Mahdi appear during the same period and work together to defeat the forces of al-Dajjal. (Sells 2013, p. 3)

Related to early Islamic history, the prophet Muhammad observed Christianity as a “backward” predecessor of Islam (Darius Shayegan 1997). Rodinson (1915–2004), the French Marxist historian, indicates that Muhammad needed to provide a counter-narrative against his opposition who questioned his loyalty to the ancestral faith and denounced him as an ambitious heretic. In the absence of supernatural assistance,

The new faith had to create a tradition for itself ... All these narratives followed the same pattern. A prophet was sent to call a people to repentance and to the worship of the one true God, but the people would not listen and were then doomed to destruction. (Rodinson 1971, p. 121)

Therefore, Muhammad took a narrative pattern from the eastern tradition of Judaeo-Christian origin; the Voice tells the story of the prophets of the past. On the other side, non-Muslim conceptions of Islam demonstrate different perceptions due to different circumstances. Hoyland (1997) illustrates that all non-Muslim reactions to the emergence of the Islamic Empire aimed to minimize the damage done to their former status and self-image (p. 524). Accordingly, the Christians considered it as the divine wrath against themselves due to perpetrated sins, and Jews, thoroughly opposite, observed it as divine grace to take revenge from their adversaries. When in 634 the emperor Heraclius¹ issued a general decree ordering the obligatory baptism of all Jews in the empire, it was evident that the ultimate confrontation between the enemies of God’s kingdom and the nation of Israel was at hand (Hoyland 1997). Ironically, it is more likely that Heraclius considered the early Muslims as some specific sect of Jews. In fact, he realized the severity of the threat from early Islam as a Jewish rage against his empire (Kaegi 2003, pp. 230, 231). The Arabs were seen as “the sword of God” to destroy sinful kingdoms. However, the consensus that the Muslim conquest took place due to divine approval did not vanish the contradictory narratives of the religious and political challenges that led to divine intervention. The Judeo-Christian reaction was split at this point.

¹ Heraclius (c. 575–641) was the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire from 610 to 641.

Since the whole empire had been affected rather than a certain individual, group or place, one of two cases had to apply. Either the collective punishment was the result of collective sin, or else the emperor himself had sinned and brought down retribution on the realm he personified. ... If among the Christians the Persian and Arab victories provoked doubts about the durability of their empire and its favoured status with God, for the Jews it inspired hopes that their unhappy period of clientage might soon be at an end. ... historical reality indeed seemed to conform very closely to eschatological expectations in the early seventh century. ... So whereas Christians regarded the invading Arabs as God's rod for their chastisement, many Jews saw them rather as God's instrument for their deliverance. (Hoyland 1997, pp. 524–528)

There are some general modalities to perceive religious reformation as we inherited from the Enlightenment and the occasions after. For example, we are all accepted that religions must keep their hands off from the political realm to prevent religionizing sovereignty. Its problematic conflict will reveal when a religious command is against a principle of human rights; all the heritage of Modern times is summarized to the way of resolving the mentioned conflict in favor of human rights. The difference between Islam and Christianity tells us the complicated process of changing the Islamic mentality to not enter the public sphere forcefully to seize the whole socio-political structure through Islamization. The difficulty is mostly referred us to the basic characteristics of the very religion, i.e., Islam, and its early history. The reform terms in the Islamic intellectual world are also evidence of the obscurity and difference from the West.

For the Arab world, enlightenment (*tanwir*) is interchangeably used with the word renaissance (*nahda*), and it implicitly includes reform (*Islah*). This interchangeability in itself reveals how blurred the concept of Enlightenment is in the Middle East. (Abaza 2007, p. 10)

The first lesson from the vagueness of the specific Islamic terminology on reformation is not to conclude and expect a modern enlightened outcome from any *Islamic awakening*. For, awakening can be a severe tendency to revival the past Islamic power. Regarding the vital importance of early Islam in the Muslim's minds, it is useful to explain some points relating to the contemporary terminology of studying religious movements in the Muslim world; usually, the fundamentalists are being referred to as "extremists." There are two opposite words against it. First is "conservatives," and the second is "reformists." The conservative Muslim is supposed to be the traditional one, and the distinction between traditional Muslims and extremist ones is that the first group has no interest in using Modern ideologies and also technologies to empower the Islamic authority. They also pretend to have an apolitical approach in contrary with both

the extremist and reformist groups, i.e., insisting on the claim that faith is a private connection between the person and Allah and showing no interest or involvement in political affairs.

There are two difficulties in understanding the conservative and reformist Islamic movement. Firstly, many reformists in the Muslim world were trying to reinforce the social and political power of Islam. They most closely resemble in this regard to extremists; both eager to use technology without the knowledge behind it, and both are not satisfied with the current situation of Islam. The will to the Islamic power comes from the mentioned discontents and the desire to give the early glory back to Islam. Therefore, it is not a surprise that many reformatory plans in Islamic history led to boost the destructive power of extremists, while the latter have more explicit goals with fewer contradictions and the first have a confused and chaotic picture of Modernity. That is why the efforts of Muslim reformists are usually resulting in the anti-modernization of their countries and raised the sense of hatred to the Western civilization. Secondly, the ascetic plan of Muslim conservatives is also vulnerable to failure because of the political entity of Sharia or Islamic law. For that reason, any efforts to keep a distance from intervening in politics out of the piety, asceticism, spirituality, or goodness must confronting the Sharia and justifying the necessity of Sharia's suspension in order to defend the real message of the prophet which is "morality" as some conservatives claim it. However, depoliticizing Islam is also a failed project of Muslim spiritualists. Due to the political ground of the early Islamic history and also the nature of the Sharia and the biography of the prophet, many of the Islamist claims are more consistent in this case, and it is still the big challenge of any reformation plan to deal with the strong authoritative tendency of the Islamic mentality.

The substantial similarity between these two non-extremist branches of Islam, i.e., reformists and conservatives, demonstrates the apparent tendency to rely on the Islamic identity and, more importantly, to refer the Muslims to the early history of Islam, just like the extremist's tendency. One of the main concepts in the Islamic belief is *Sunna*. In this regard, living in accord with *Sunna* is the only true form of being Muslim. The religious legitimacy of *Sunna* is also free from doubt in the Islamic teachings as it is understood by the majority of Muslims (Hawting 2000). The crucial point is the political connotations of *Sunna* in the Islamic common sense and the ordinary understanding of many Muslims. There is an old pattern of research in early Islamic history to reduce the whole Muhammadanist movement to the mere social situation of the Arabian Peninsula (Donner 2010). The missed fact is forgetting the fundamental elements of political theology in the very life of the Prophet. It seems that the emergence of Islam

was primarily a religious movement, with social and economic aspects, which went further in its own natural process of transforming into the Arab superiority and nativist expansionism to form an Islamic empire. There are convincing and consistent shreds of evidence to prove the existence of the will to the power in the early history of Islam and the deeds of its prophet. The clearest example is the second chapter of Muhammad's life in Medina and his way to make Arab sovereignty under the name of the newly established God, Allah, to reunite the whole Island. Some readings of the early Islamic history show that the concept of *umma* is also born due to the necessity of solving the tribal conflicts in Medina (Kennedy 2004, p. 34). Apart from these geopolitical aspects, there is a wider idea of Islamic expansionism in the very period of the prophet's life. That is why he aimed to rearrange the old Meccan trading commonwealth.

The old system had been a series of agreements among equals whereas the expansion of Islam was to mean the imposition of the authority of the Muslim élite by force if necessary. The *umma* could not stand still, it had to expand or disintegrate. So long as there were Arabs who did not accept the authority of Muhammad, the ideological position of Islam would be challenged. If raiding within the community was to be abolished another outlet had to be found for the martial energies of the tribesmen and another source of revenue for the impoverished nomad. Muhammad had understood this well and his expeditions in the direction of Syria pointed the way. But Islam was to be the religion of all humanity, not just the Arabs, and there was no reason why the authority of the *umma* in Medina should be confined to the Arabic-speaking peoples; the Islamic conquests were a natural continuation of the Prophet's work. (Kennedy 2004, p. 48)

Muhammad was the first Muslim to actualize the political potentiality of his own religion. The Islamic perception of "polis" is initially institutional as the political embodiment of divinity. The city-state in the Islamic sense is a united body politic to serve God's purposes. Indicating the importance of the early Islamic period, Islam was not only a religious community (*die Religionsgemeinschaft*), but also it was a political system (*das Staatswesen*) (Noth 1966, p. 18). Moreover, Islam has massive rituals includes prayer and other descriptions and arrangements for any compartment of the personal and social life. There is no section of the human life that Allah has no command or order about it. The difference between Islam and Judaism, in this case, is crucial; the Judaic image of the polis took place more in Religious myths and stories other than the real history. We are facing the sacred narration to perceive the Judaic history. However, there are historical signs of the existence of the Mecca government constituted by Muhammad. Allah has a closer tie to the actuality of human history than Yahweh. The ties of contemporary secular Israel are unfastened with the political culture of Judaism

(Sicker 2001), while the Islamic Republic has a more fixed conjointment with the political culture of Islam. It should be mentioned that not every political theology necessarily ends up with the idea of theocracy (Sicker 2001). Walzer expresses that the crucial Jewish terms of “exile” and “redemption” are a part of the theological understanding of “secular time and eternity, mundane geography and the space of holiness.” Walzer puts a skeptic reflection on the possibility to draw a conclusion that all critical political challenges of the Jewish exilic life direct to a political obligation. Walzer considers the connection between a mythic indication of redemption and its “necessarily” implication to propose “a redemptive politics” (Walzer et al. 2000, p. xxx).

There was no popular opposition to kingship after the exile, presumably because there was no actual experience of kingly government; Jewish kings were figments of the Jewish imagination, and they were consistently imagined, across the diaspora, as messianic figures leading Israel back to its own land. (Walzer et al. 2000, p. 113)

Regardless of the debate on the Jewish foundations of the state of Israel in contemporary history, it is vital to know that Judaism is more mythical than Islam. In fact, *messianic time* in Judaism is a Jewish invention for the End of Days will no longer be politically oppressed like what had happened in *historical time* (Schwartz 2004). The arrival of the Messiah as a tie between myths of exiles and myths of redemption is similar to the idea of the occulted and awaited Imam in Shiism. However, it should be a root in Jewish history that no political figure like Khomeini emerged from Rabbinic Judaism. In this regard, Muhammad is a kind of real governor and Moses, besides many other Jewish kings, is more ancient and more symbolic. That is why the political capability of Islam is alive and more ready to join the reality and make a real Islamic state as a political embodiment of the Islamic divinity. From early Islamic history till now, Islam always has its own rule (the Islamic jurisprudence), governor (the Caliph)², judge, and its own army. Islam is the religion of governance and trade. Rodinson traces the practical theology of Quran into the then Arab trading activity. He quoted from Charles C. Torrey (1863–1956), the American historian, to illuminate the extension of Quranic practical theology.

The mutual relations between God and man are of a strictly commercial nature. Allah is the ideal merchant. He includes all the universe in his reckoning. All is counted,

² As Bernard Lewis (1988) reminds us, “right through the Middle Ages, the title *khalīfa* was only used by those who held, or at least claimed, the office of supreme Muslim ruler, and never by lesser sovereigns with more limited claims” (p. 46).

everything measured. The book and the balances are his institution, and he has made himself the pattern of honest dealing. Life is a business, for gain or loss. He who does a good or an evil work ('earns' good or evil), receives his pay for it, even in this life. Some debts are forgiven, for Allah is not a hard creditor. The Muslim makes a loan to Allah; pays in advance for paradise; sells his own soul to him, a bargain that prospers. The unbeliever has sold the divine truth for a paltry price, and is bankrupt. Every soul is held as security for the debt it has contracted. At the resurrection, Allah holds a final reckoning with all men. Their actions are read from the account-book, weighed in the balances; each is paid his exact due, no one is defrauded. Believer and unbeliever receive their wages. The Muslim (who has been given *manifold* payment for each of his good deeds) receives moreover his special reward. (Rodinson 1973, p. 81)

Torrey, according to Rodinson (1973), concludes that Islam is the simplest mathematical "body of divinity," and Rodinson, comprehensively, explains that mathematics is not equal to rationality in this sense. For, the ideology of the Quran keeps many things inaccessible to human reason (1973, pp. 81, 82). Finding a solution for the problematic aspect of the Islamic reformation is not simple and is not also attainable in the current intellectual atmosphere of the whole Muslim world, especially in the Middle East. Removing the public scene from the political activity and influence of the Islamic mentality requires a leading shift in any perspective deals with Islam as one of the most important entities in our contemporary era. As an indication of the complexity of the issue, it is necessary to consider the great ability of Islamic combination with the sense of nationalism, xenophobia, and also anti-capitalist approaches. Regarding the latter, there is a meaningful tie between the political views of the Left and the Islamic perspective toward the Modern world. Therefore, ascetic teachings and abstention from all forms of indulgence translated to the struggle against the culture of capitalism to consume as much as possible.

Moreover, Islamic misogyny is interpreted as resistance against Western modes, and burka becomes a symbol of objection to the capitalist order of the world.³ For example, Butler (2011), the famous American philosopher and gender theorist, is an optimist about emerging an Islamic group out of an "open and free election," neglecting the peculiar characteristics of Islam and, for example, its will to suppress religious minorities (para. 10). There is also a crucial question

³ There are numerous evidences to demonstrate that the Western Left joins the struggle of the Shiite political clericalism in Iran against Israel or, as both prefer to say, "Zionism." By the same irrational ideological preference, they also prone to promote and support Islamic values for women against Western nudity and fashion which make the female body an instrument in the hands of capitalism. In both cases, they prefer to neglect the brutal internal oppression of an anti-Israeli government and also the clear and substantial discrimination against women in Islam.

on the possibility of actualizing democracy by giving power to an Islamic group whose main purpose is to apply Sharia to the whole society. Butler also defends the triviality of Islamic misogyny, which is exemplified in the form of the obligatory veil and subjugating women in the Muslim world to the male will. Butler's argumentation in this regard has no difference with the utterances of Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers to oppress Iranian women under the title of *struggle with the Western decadence*. "burka can be a way of preserving a woman's honor, and even a way of resisting certain western modes of dress that signify a full encroachment of fashion and commodity dress that signifies the cultural efforts to efface Islamic practice" (Butler 2006, para. 3). In this case, she argued that among the global discrimination against women, it is nonsense to focus on the Islamic zone, which is a weak and arbitrary argument in favor of seizing the secular public sphere by the Islamic dominance and authority. Ahmari (2017a) explains the defects of liberalism partly in underscoring the identity politics⁴ by the left amid amorphous globalism as an illiberal detractor of conservatism.

2.2 Political Theology of Shiism

When we speak about the religious reformation, there is no escape to think about the opposite; religious conservatism. Strictly speaking, it is hard to say that the only opposite of the reformative approach in religion is the conservative one. In the case of the political theology of Ruhollah Khomeini, he is not a mere revolutionary and not a mere conservative. He combined some elements of both sides into the idea of the sovereignty of jurisprudence or historically the reign of jurists. Similarly, Khomeini had adopted the Shiite policy of *taqiyya*, in the time of weakness and the assertive self-expression during his powerful leadership. Kohlberg (1975) articulates the historical pretexts of *taqiyya* which is relatively similar to the situation of revolutionary Shiis under Pahlavis.

[*taqiyya* refers to] the period when Shi'is were ... persecuted by the authorities ... Al-Bāqir and al-Šādiq led a life of retirement and avoided as much as possible any interference in the stormy political events of their time. They must have come to believe that the best guarantee for the survival of Shi'ism lay not in the taking up of arms but

⁴ Identity politics refers to a tendency of sharing a particular racial, religious, ethnic, social, or cultural identity to form exclusive political alliances, instead of engaging in traditional broad-based political participatory structure or prioritize particular interests without regard for interests of the body politic in general.

in the preservation and propagation of the Shīrī heritage ... the first priority was to protect their lives. (Kohlberg 1975, p. 396)

Concerning his personality, Khomeini had no prudence, and his reputation partly owed his direct indications, radical criticism, and sharp reactions. However, Khomeini had learned to be prudent when the directness could not meet his ends. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that *taqiyya* had primarily its function as a part of the quietist period of Shiism, i.e., the Shiite survival instinct, but the main term is capable of using by the Shiite will to the power. The Shia adopted the quietist stance due to the actual fear of being persecuted. They preferred to disguise their views in order to be survived. The Shiite fearful quietism also had a theoretical consequence of stopping to elaborate their concept of Islamic leadership and develop a theology with distinction from that of the Sunni majority (Bennison 2009, p. 39). On the contrary, there is an articulation that the opposite approach of *Ghulāt* to divinize the Imams was also a result of oppression under the Umayyad Caliphate (Jafarian 2009). *Ghulāt* was an anti-Umayyad movement due to the prevention of pro-Shiite sensations (W. F. Tucker 2008). In other words, *Ghālīn* (exaggerators) appeared because of severe restrictions of self-expression. Therefore, the history of Shiism is full of short respectively fortunate, and misfortunate times due to the emergence of a ruler with pro-Shii inclination, who succeeded by a ruler with an anti-Shii policy (Momen 1985, p. 103). This kind of paradox of Shiism is the result of many changes in its doctrinal process, which depends on certain crucial historical turning points.

2.2.1 An Introduction to the Political Shiism

Shia Islam includes those Muslims who are not counted among the majority of the Islamic regions named Sunni. The division between Sunni and Shia comes back to the death of the prophet Muhammad when his followers questioned themselves about who would be his successor as the leader of the Islamic community. Shiites are those who followed Ali, the closest relative of Muhammad, as his true successor. Shia Islam believes in the Imamate; the idea that the successor of Muhammad is more than merely a political leader. He has divine power, and he is a spiritual leader simultaneously with his religio-political position. It means that the Imam must have the ability to interpret the deeper meanings and hidden implications of the Quran and the Sharia. The Twelver Shias further believe that the Twelve Imams who succeeded the prophet were sinless and free from error

and had been chosen by Allah through Muhammad. Related to Iranian history, Shiism also served to differentiate Iran from all its neighbors, which were almost all Sunni states: Ottomans in the west, central Asian states in the northeast, and Indian-Muslim states in the southeast.

Both Sunni and Shia respect the Quran. They believe in God and the prophet, and they follow the obligations of prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and almsgiving. Both admire the Sharia deeply as the revealed law of God. The difference is about who should hold leadership. The Sunnis believe that the prophet Muhammad died without naming any successor. Therefore, the Muslims in Medina took the initiative and chose the eligible person from their ranks named as caliphs. Caliph's duty was to defend Islam, spread it, and implement the Sharia. On the contrary, the Shia believe that Muhammad chose a successor (his cousin). In the eyes of Shia, as Calvert expresses, the caliphs are nothing more than illegitimate usurpers of Islamic power (Foreign Policy Research Institute 2014). However, the history of early Islam is woven with both Shiite quietism and Shiite political activism.

If Twelver Shi'ite activism has its roots in the wars of Alī and the rising of Husayn against Yazīd, its quietist strand is equally well founded in 'Alī's acceptance of the rule of the first three caliphs, in Hasan's abdication in favor of Mu'āwīya, and in the express policies of the Imams after Husayn. (McEoin 1984, p. 18)

Modarressi (1993) explains that Shiism was mere an anti-Umayyad movement and only during the fifth Imam Muḥammad al-Baqir (677–733 CE) it starts to be shaped like a “distinct legal school” within the Islamic community (p. 4). According to Modarressi, at the beginning of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate, Shia Islam had become a completed independent belief system in the field of politics, jurisprudence, and theology. During the sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (700–765 CE), the Shii concept of Imamāt transformed from a political dissidence to more a religious leadership.

Even for those who emphasized the political role of the Imām, Ja'far al-Šādiq's failure to assume an active political role resulted in a major reconsideration of the institution of Imamate. The Imām was no longer the long-awaited savior; at least, this was no longer considered to be his major role. Now, for them like the others, the Imām was the head of religion. In this manner, the community changed the emphasis of the institution of Imamate from political to religious authority. (Modarressi 1993, p. 9)

More importantly, Modarressi accurately pictures the circumstances at the last years of the eleventh Imam Hasan al-Askari (846–874 CE) and the theoretical

complexities and factual contradictions concerning the crisis of leadership in Shiism, which ended up with the public acceptance of the existence of an occulted Imam in the subsequent centuries. According to Modarressi (1993), the Prophetic statement about the *mahdī* began to be recorded in the post-Occultation period. Although the general idea of the occultation of a future Imam, as *qā'im* (the one who rises up), was an established concept in the Shiite mentality, *mahdī* as “the rightly guided one,” was essentially a *non-Imamite concept*. There was also a major technical problem of identifying the right person as *mahdī* and the link between two concepts that whether the *mahdī* was the same as the *qā'im* or different. As a crucial fact in Shiite history, it seems that the concept of *mahdī* has appeared later in the Imamite debates. “The reference to the concept of *mahdī* in connection to the vanished son of Hasan al-‘Askarī is absent in the Imāmite works written in the last decades of the third/ninth century, even in those that describe him as the *qā'im*” (p. 91).

As it is discussed more in chapter 4 about the wide Shiite realm and the meaning of the new Shiism after 1979, there is needed to enlighten some presumptions about Shia Islam. The whole debate is being formed around the precedence of Khomeini's idea, i.e., *Wilāyat-i faqih*. The history of Shia Islam is inseparable from immigration, displacement, and exile. The Shiites were forced to leave their land due to the political pressure of Sunni Caliphates. Even Twelve Shiis migrated to India to survive the devastating circumstances after Mongol invasions (Momen 1985). The leading orientalists affirm that “the indigenous tradition of Shii scholarship was considerably reinforced by the emigration of ‘ulamā’ from centers outside Iran like *Djabal ‘Āmil* in Syria and *al-Bahrayn*” (Lewis et al. 1998, p. 50). They express that these immigrations in Shiite history extended the influence of ulama to clear away the traces of “heterodox origins of the Safawids” (Lewis et al. 1998, p. 50). Similarly, Modarressi (2003) lightens that “the beginning of specifically Shī'ite literature can be traced to the late Umayyad period with a number of anti-Umayyad sectarian pamphlets and a book” (p. xiii). It is also vital to indicate that the discussion of political Shiism does not imply the negligence of variety within the Shiite history with all the possible skepticism on the adherence of each Shiite scholars to the principles of the *madhhab*. “Were their words always merely restatements of the teachings of the imam and his officially authorized representatives? How did each writer see his own contribution in terms of the hierarchical authority within the doctrinal system to which he belonged?” (Walker 1993, p. 5). In other words, the discussion is on the theories, not the theorists themselves. Human beings are the integral source of variety, but the theories are more determined and subjected to a similar assessment.

2.2.2 The Myth of [positive] Innovation in Shiite *Uṣūlī* School: A Case of the “Bad Rationalization”

There is two major division led to four notable differentiation in the history of Islam. The first is a differentiation in Sunni theology, i.e., Ash’arism and Mu’tazilites that appeared during the 8th to the 10th centuries. Within the Sunni tradition, Ash’arism is considered as an orthodox interpretation of Islam and Mu’tazila as a rational perception of Islam. However, as is it discussed later on the difficulties to categorize various Islamic identities, here the term “orthodox” does not mean irrational or anti-rational (Hughes 2013). The major difference between Ash’arism and Mut’azilites belongs to the *kalām* and their different account of God’s attributes, the meaning of the Quran as a creation of God, the possibility of God’s speech, and the endless debate on theodicy, the free will, and the divine destiny. There is also another intercommunal debate between the apophatic theology, i.e., *tanẓīh* (negative), and the cataphatic theology, i.e., *tashbīh* or positive, within Muslim scholars. Regarding the mutual influence between Abrahamic religions, Harry A. Wolfson believes that the idea of the incorporeality of God in Islam, i.e. He is only described as being unlike any of His created beings, is hardly possible to be rooted in Tertullian origin, “for all the Christian influences upon the Kalam come from Greek Christianity, not from Latin Christianity” (Wolfson 1976, p. 12). That was how the Islamic theology developed during centuries with everlasting adherence from both sides to the Muslim faith (e.g., God’s oneness, Day of Judgment).

The major school of rationalist theology in the Mamluk period was the Ash’arite school. Ash’arism was named after Abū al-Hasan ‘Alī al-Ash’arī, who died in Baghdad 324/936. Al-Ash’arī had originally supported Mu’tazilism, but had later turned towards the traditionalists ... Ash’arism had gradually developed into a school of rational theology (*kalām*) ... The traditionalists did not call their theology *kalām*, which was based on rationalism, but rather *uṣūl al-dīn* (the sources of religion) ... They rejected the use of rational methods for explaining questions of dogma. The traditionalists considered the dogmas as issues of faith. (Perho 1995, p. 27)

The Mu’tazilites referred to themselves as the *ahl al-adl wa’-tawhid* (People of [Divine] Justice and Unity). There are similarities between them due to being devoted to the principal Islamic beliefs. However, Mu’tazila wanted to rationalize anthropomorphisms in the Quran, while Ash’aria considered them literally. “Whereas the Mutazilites argued for God’s absolute justice, the Asharites emphasized God’s absolute omnipotence. Many of the post-Ghazali writings of the Asharites ... display an extremely sophisticated rationalism” (Hughes 2013,

p. 192). The rationalism of Mutazlities did not prevent them from pursuing the religious persecution of dissidents, known as the *Mihna* when a political opportunity was being provided under the reign of ‘Abbāsid Caliph al-Ma’mūn in 833. Ma’mūn did not only want to bring “orthodoxy” of the proto-Sunni ulama into question but also he aimed to picture himself as a Caliph with an exclusive right to be identified as the most “orthodox” and the guardian of that “orthodoxy” (Zaman 1971, pp. 106–112).

A juristic method in Sunnism came out of this theological differentiation. The cataphatic theology has a tie with similar kinds of verses in the Quran named *āyāt al-tashb’h*. The conflation appears when such crude anthropomorphic verses as “hands and feet and a face” being opposed by explicit anti-anthropomorphic verses formulated in a negative language like “condemning idolatry and the worship of other gods, which by implication means the negation of anthropomorphism” (Wolfson 1976, p. 9). These anthropomorphic Quranic verses have been subjected to disputable discussions between various Islamic schools. Shiism mainly believes that the interpretation of these verses, like all other verses, is the specialty of Prophet and Imams. In Sunni Islam, as Wolfson illustrates, one group affirmed anthropomorphism thoroughly. “Another group tried to harmonize the anthropomorphic verses with the anti-anthropomorphic verses by interpreting the former.” Some interpreted them to mean that God has “a body, unlike bodies” (Wolfson 1976, p. 10). Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), a leading Arab historiographer and historian and a pre-Mu’tazilite orthodox, was among the latter. He converted the “likeness” between things in general, and not necessarily between God and human beings. Therefore, *qiyās* in Sunni jurisprudence derived from the latter sense of “likeness” with reference to sayings of Rashidun caliphs. From an orthodox and regressive view, Shiite jurisprudence rejected the Sunni principle of analogy by referring to their Imams that “the religion of Allah cannot be interpreted by the reason” (Al-Barqi 2011, p. 339). In this context, there is confusion between similar terms with different meanings. The negative Shiite concept of *aql* means the positive Sunni concept of *qiyās*. Accordingly, the positive concept of *aql* is a primary logical step like “the prerequisite of a religious obligation is also obligatory.” Therefore, the position of *aql* as the fourth source in Shiite jurisprudence is not in accord with the popular assumption that Shiite *fiqh* is an innovative derivation from the major Muslim world. The reason is Shiite *fiqh* is subordinated to the Sharia in an instrumentalist approach. Shiism even accepts *ijmā’*, as the third source of its jurisprudence after the Quran and the Sunna, only conditional; a given consensus is valid only as a way to discover the opinion of infallible Imams. In Shiism, all seemingly different ways are ended up with their Imams, and the obedience in Shia Islam is spread to fourteen sanctified figures,

while Sunni Islam has confined Sunna only to Prophet. Mozaffari reminds us that the political Shiism is much stronger than Sunni one, due to its institutionalization and its proneness to sanctify the guardian jurist by referring his legitimacy to the infallible Imams (Beaucon 2014).

In this matter, what Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi (972–1058 CE)⁵ articulates on the Sunni theory of governance in his classic book *The Ordinances of Government* can give a hint of the political philosophy in Sunnism. He takes the necessity of the government as an axiom without any need to be proved separately. Al-Mawardi (1989) indicates the situation in which no state rules on the land; he considers it as specific anarchy that people cannot recognize right from wrong. Without a caliph, Muslim society equates goodness with evilness (p. 43). Al-Mawardi's premise of governance is similar to what Khomeini provides as theoretical presumptions of *wilāyat-i faqih*; both of them emphasize the obviousness of the necessity to rule. However, both of them commit a fallacious theoretical transition from the general necessity of governance to the specific Islamic government. In other words, their general argument cannot carry their peculiar claim. Moreover, there is a tone of sanctifying governance in Sunni tradition, which has no precedent in Shiism until the emergence of Khomeini and his *wilāyat-i faqih*. The expression of Khomeini to identify the endless border of the guardian jurist is likely a crucial shift from the oppositional role of Shiite political theory to the actual sanctification of state. In this sense, *wilāyat-i faqih* in late Shiism reasonably resembles the caliphate in Sunni doctrine. However, the *ithna-‘ashari* doctrine of *Imāmah* is clear that the occulted Imam continues to govern the world during his *ghayba* and, more vitally, his sovereign rights is incomparable to any earthly government and “cannot be shared by any secular power” (Lewis et al. 1998, p. 50). At the end of the eighteenth century, Mohammad Kazem Khorasani (1839–1911)⁶ asserted that it is almost impossible to give a juristic argumentation in order to equate *faqih* with Imam in the field of the obligatory obedience (Khorasani 2008, p. 63). Since the Safavid era, Iranian Shiite clergies had faced

⁵ Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi was an Islamic jurist of the Shafi'i school. He is well-known for his theoretical endeavors on religion, government, the meaning of the caliphate, and constitutional law during a time of crisis. al-Mawardi was appointed as the chief judge over several districts near Nishapur and Baghdad. He also served as a diplomat under the ‘Abbāsid Caliphate.

⁶ Mohammad Kazem Khorasani, known as Akhund-e Khorasani, was a prominent Twelver Shia Marja, politician, and theologian. He is one of the most important Shiite scholars in the contemporary history of Iran. His most famous work is *The Sufficiency (Kefāyah)* where he illustrates the juristic reflections such as “continuity” in a more accurate way as a relatively consistent theory of jurisprudence.

the fundamental question of ultimate sovereignty within the theocracy. Keddie (1983) articulates that “the usuli ulama have a stronger doctrinal position than do the Sunni ulama. While not infallible, mujtahids are qualified to interpret the will of the infallible twelfth Hidden Imam” (p. 582). In Keddie’s expression, the “stronger” can be equated to *more politically motivated* or *has a deeper will to the power*.

Respectively, the second major division is a distinctness in Shiite theology, i.e., *Akhbārī* and *Uṣūlī* which followed by their antagonist juristic theories. During the Safavid era, the *ulama* were enabled to establish themselves as an empowered class and started the process of institutionalizing Shii clericalism. As Amir Arjomand (1988) notes, the adoption of the principle of *ijtihād* can be considered as an intellectual revolution in medieval Shiism, which led to the empowerment of the juristic authority of *ulama*. By flourishing “rational theology” and jurisprudence, *Akhbārī* traditionalism became marginalized. However, the revival of *Akhbārism* during the second half of the 17th century was a consequence of the resistance of the rapid hierocratic power in Iran. *Akhbārī* movement became dominant during the last decades of the crumbling Safavid dynasty (p. 13). Since politics is a sphere of human will and human insight, it is not predictable what would come out of the political investment. Accordingly, The Safavid rulers brought orthodox Shiism into Iran and promoted it as a religious barrier in front of anti-Safavid extremism. Henceforth, many antagonist phenomena derived from the Safavid Shiism.

During the Qajar period, the *Uṣūlī* school of thought gained momentum in Iran against the *Akhbārism*. It was an era of restoring their social order and authority, independent from the fragile Qajar monarchy (Axworthy 2013). The *Akhbārī* doctrine emphasizes that the Quran and the *hadīth* would meet the needs of guidance and leaving little room to exercise of *ijtihād*. Conversely, the *Uṣūlī* doctrine underlines the importance of reinterpretation of Islamic law in each generation of *ulama* and further argued that *ijtihād* could only be exercised by trained *ulama* who would carry the title of *mujtahid* and to whom people could imitate and rely as a source of their religiosity (Axworthy 2013). The Usuli doctrine always recognized a *marja al-taqlīd*. They emerge among the whole body of *mujtahid* and serve as a supreme guide to other ulama and Muslims in their religious affairs. The struggle between *Uṣūlī* and *Akhbārī* led to opposing theological-legal standpoints and “has generated significant scholarly analysis, particularly with respect to its impact on the central enterprise of Shī‘ī law and theology” (Sayeed 2013, p. 89).

It is a theme of vitality to know the bad rationalization of *Uṣūlī school* which ended up with an actualized political theology of Khomeini. In this regard, all

complexities of the categorization of Islamic ideologies appear. Does *Akhbārism* a regressive school only due to its supposed orthodoxy? Does *Uṣūlism* progressive due to its supposed reformist approach? There are even more categorized concepts in the intercommunal differentiation of Islamic identities like “anti-rationalist Traditionalists” (Jackson 2005, p. 180), which is attributed to the Hanbali school⁷ of Sunni Islam. However, it is possible to follow the attribution of some scholars like Sayeed (2013) to *Uṣūlīs* as rationalists and *Akhbārīs* as traditionalists. It is also affirmable that the traditionalists assert on the faithful transmission of reports, texts, and all the materials which have formed the collection of *hadīths*. However, as Sayeed illustrates, there is a reasonable skeptic assumption to acknowledge *uṣūlī* doctrine as a rationalist position “necessitated a higher level of hermeneutical engagement with texts and independent reasoning” or as a belief in “the primacy of reason in ascertaining the validity and application of traditions” (p. 88). The debate within Shii *hadīth* studies about the transmission of them cannot form a fundamental differentiation in itself. The *Uṣūlīs* can be called “rationalists” only based on their instrumentalist approach to the reason as a prologue of dominant juristic prolongation in Shiism. The supposed “hermeneutical engagement” has been obsessed with generational efforts to collect opposing *hadīths*, to compare *hadīths* with the Quran, and to force coherency on the separate sayings which sometimes deny each other. In other words, the reason is a servant of *Uṣūlī* jurisprudence, and in this sense, it has no primacy or superiority. Following Mu’tazilite doctrine, *Uṣūlīs* claimed that human deeds have essential characteristics of being right or wrong (*hosn va qohb-e zāti*). The *Akhbārīs* are clear to deny it and asserts on the divine will to give the attributions of right and wrong to human deeds. The polemic of the theodicy shows its face here.

However, the determinism of *Akhbārīs* is more coherent and more consistent. On the contrary, *Uṣūlīs* have instrumentalized their loose attachment to the reason by posing a relativistic phase in the former belief; henceforth comes another concept as *hosn va qohb-e aqli*, i.e., the rational features of right and wrong in human deeds. The relativism of *Uṣūlī* school demonstrates itself by claiming a kind of double-reality; *Uṣūlī* doctrine claims that the intrinsic normative characteristics of human deeds belong to the reality and the rational normative characteristics are limited to the faculty of reason. Since human reason is restricted, restrained, and incomplete, then only certain results of reason can be acknowledged by Sharia. As it is discussed in section 2.2.4, this step reminds us of the preparation of *wilāyat-i*

⁷ Hanbalism is one of the traditional Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence. It is named after the Iraqi scholar Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855). The Hanbali *madhhab* is the smallest of four major Sunni schools, the others being the Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafi’i.

faqih in the early theo-political treatise of Khomeini. He claims that the reason is not qualified to propose a form of governance due to its defects and Allah, as the most completed reason and as *the creator of reason*, had already proposed his own sanctified form of guardianship. The *Uṣūlī* nullifies its alleged rationalism by making it relativistic, which leads to the subordination of reason in front of Sharia. Their rejection of rational assumptions has driven them to devalue *qiyās* in Sunni tradition because analogy cannot be reached the absolute level of rational certainty (Javadi Amoli 2002). Forming analogies is a function of reason, and by invalidating one ability of human reason, there is no logical ground to claim any adherence to the rest of its abilities. From *Uṣūlī* perspective, reason can only recognize God's justice in general, but it has incapable to identify the examples of justice and tyranny in the divine deeds (Mesbah Yazdi 2001). That is the real meaning of *qā'edah-ie molā'zemeh* (the principle of mutual implication between the reason and the Sharia) that becomes the *Uṣūlīs* honor and privilege when the Shiite clergies in Iran want to underscore their supposed unique difference from other Islamic identities. On this basis, the common sense of divine characteristics vanishes; a human understanding of cruelty becomes God's feature of grace.

That is why the *Uṣūlīs*, from Khomeini to the current supreme leader, always justified Islamic punishment as God's grace embodied in Sharia. Even, some clergies find the roots of natural disasters in human sins, peculiarly Iranian women "who wear revealing clothing and behave promiscuously are to blame for earthquakes" ("Women to blame for earthquakes, says Iran cleric" 2010, para. 4). Mirdamadi illustrates that some later-became-dissident clergies reacted to sermons that connect the natural evils with human deeds (Mirdamadi 2017). However, there is no considerable resistance between the so-called *Uṣūlīs* to confront the Shiite hierocracy after 1979. Let us reformulate the old *problem of evil* under transformed *Uṣūlīsm* after the Islamic Revolution; the omnipotent God has the power to prevent human suffering without thereby either allowing an equal or greater evil or preventing an equal or greater good. However, suffering is the path to heaven, and the political theology of Khomeini is the manifestation of justifying the domestic suffering in order to expand Shiite ideology to the world. The reformulation of the problem of evil concerning the theoretical overlaps between *Uṣūlīsm* and Khomeinism and the practical collaboration between *Uṣūlīs* and the Shiite hierocracy all are connected to section 3.4. The mentioned chapter is an assessment of the Islamic Republic under the aesthetic reflections of Edmund Burke and the sublime aspects of fear, suffering, and pain in front of equanimity, enjoy and pleasure as the illustrations of beauty. The *bad rationalization* of *Uṣūlīsm* drove it to theorize the sublimity of *wilāyat-i faqih*.

In this regard, the sublimity of fear is part of the sublimity of evils. The political theology of Khomeini, as a prominent and revolutionary *Uṣūlī*, is based on the sanctification of fear which is part of the sanctified evils. That is why Ruhollah Khomeini described the eight years of war between Iran and Iraq as *Ne'mat-e Elāhi* (the divine grace). No need to say that Iran-Iraq was the deadliest conventional war ever fought between regular armies of developing countries (Fürtig 2012) and thousands of civilians on both sides died in air raids and ballistic missile attacks. "By 1988, more than a million lives had been lost—three-fourths of them Iranians" (Harmon 2004, p. 72). However, as Mackie (1955) explains the fallacious solutions for the problem of evil, one of the proposed solutions is that "Evil is due to human free will" (p. 208). Khomeini believed that the evils of the war are derived from human will and demonstrates it as well. In this regard, the sanctified will to the power is a justification of the evils as necessary means to self-expression of the will.

In this way, human reason works only as the ornament of divinity. Cumulatively, *Uṣūlīsm* dedicates absolute values to heaven and delivers relativistic vagueness to the earth. Therefore, stoning a woman who committed adultery has an essential characteristic in reality, but only God knows the realness of reality. In this position, human reason has no way to consider stoning as an unjust law. With all these considerations, *Uṣūlī* doctrine devaluates theodicy by making it relativistic; God is just, but we cannot assess his justness. God is omniscient of the past and present, and that ignorance is not possible for Him. Instead, we are ignorant of the divine ends. In this regard, *Uṣūlīsm* extinguishes its supposed difference with "anti-rationalist" identities in like *Akhhārīsm* in Shia and even Ash'arism in Sunni Islam. For, *Uṣūlī* school also asserts that the comprehension of the unique nature and characteristics of God all were beyond human capability. In general, all the Islamic schools of theology faced the dilemma of affirming divine transcendence and divine attributes, without descending toward anthropomorphism or emptying scriptural references to those attributes of all concrete meaning. In other words, the old theological division in the Abrahamic tradition affected the *Uṣūlī* doctrine in its instrumentalist approach to reason.

At the center of virtually all of the debates among them is the problem of how to affirm God's attributes and transcendence without falling into anthropomorphism, on the one hand, and without emptying God's attributes of concrete meaning, on the other. Whatever the approach taken to this dilemma (and metaphorical interpretation [*ta'wīl*] was among the most common), no school of Muslim theology has showed a willingness to compromise on the question of God's transcendence. (Jackson 2005, p. 181)

Concerning political Islam, it seems that *uṣūlism* had provided the juristic preparations to give birth to *wilāyat-i faqih*. In this regard, all the Burkean criticism on abstraction and rationalization without a sense of actuality and benevolence can be applied to the *Uṣūlī* doctrine. The *Uṣūlī* doctrine of the *wilāyat-i faqih* is the clear example of what Burke (2003) identifies as “mere abstract competence of the supreme power” in contrary to *moral competence* (p. 18). The contemporary concept of *ijtihād* is a fruitless result of the *Uṣūlī* abstract obsession to categorize and then to proceed to subcategorize all juristic themes. It does not seem that the alleged “rationalism” in *Uṣūlī* leads to rationality in theory or practice. *Uṣūlīs* are who rule in Iran for over forty years, and their innovations in *ijtihād* made no difference to apply the criminal laws of Sharia to lash, to stone, and to execute people being entitled to obscure accusations like *mofsed fi al-arz*. In this regard, *Uṣūlism* is an example of *bad reformation*. From a conservative political philosophy, *Akhbārism* is more prudent and can be identified as the juristic derivation from the general Shiite quietism. On the contrary, *Uṣūlism* is a juristic revivalist movement derived from the general Shiite activism. Therefore, *Uṣūlī* doctrine is the legal wing of political Shiism, and Iranian history after 1970 demonstrates it.

Accordingly, the idea of *wilāyat-i faqih* has precedence in Shiism with an insignificant role due to its limited connotations. The spectrum of *wilāyat-i faqih* starts from *al-umūr al-hasbiyyah* and ends with *wilāyat-i motlaqeh*. Actually, the major shift in Shiite theology and its transition from a limited authority to an absolute guardianship is the result of *Uṣūlī* extreme and abstract rationalization. Amanat (2009) explains ties between Messianic, i.e., Mahdistic, sensations in Shiism and the modernization of theological discourse in *Uṣūlism*. He explains that the theoretical ambiguity in Imami Shiism affected the chance to propose a distinctive definition of superiority in learning and in a higher level of institutionalizing the religious authority. The inevitable presence of the occulted Imam left no theoretical free zone to develop a supreme authority. The issue of authority in *Uṣūlī* school was always controversial and antagonistic. Therefore, the identification of leadership in the occultation found intrinsically limited theological grounds.

The fact that the degree of such legal knowledge could not be determined by any empirical means may not have facilitated the follower’s difficult task of choosing a *marja’*, but it clearly established one point: There was no theoretical justification—even in the jurisprudence (*fiqh*) of the dominant Usuli school—for absolute legal authority. Even the greatest of the nineteenth-century legal scholars, Shaykh Murtaza Ansari (d. 1864), who is often regarded by posterity as the first *marja’-i taqlid-i tamm*,

is careful to interpret *a'lamiyat*, without ever clearly defining its boundaries, as a comparative quality. Several commentators of Ansari also agree with him on this issue. (A. Amanat 2009, p. 150)

Amanat (2009) asserts that *Uṣūlī* juristic movement under the influence of Ansari and his successors, prior to Khomeini's doctrine of the *wilāyat-i faqih*, had "no logical ground for constituting a systematic line of juristic authority" and "it never developed an institutionalized process for creating a complete pyramid." Due to the inherent limitations of Shii hierarchical theory, whether in *Uṣūlīsm* or other schools, "the emergence of a supreme authority... was thus held back ... by the presence (more accurately, the material absence) of the Imam" (p. 152). As discussed in section 1.2.3, the *Uṣūlī* rationalization and institutionalization of the Shiism which ended up with *wilāyat-i faqih* is an evident example of what Edmund Burke (2003), in accord with his conservative pessimism of religious dissidence, warns of making heavy the religious claims and its proneness to become "great stretches of intolerance" and "very violent exertions of despotism" (pp. 11, 12).

2.2.3 The Myth of Mystical Shiism: The Negligence of Political Shiism from Corbin to Shaygan

It is still a popular interpretation about Shiism that the main core of Shia Islam is the esoteric message of the Quran, which can be decoded only by the prophet or his successors as the true eligible sacred leaders of the Muslim community, i.e., Shia Imams. In this sense, Shia is the continuity of the divine blessing (Naderi 2015, p. 38). From a perspective related to the inevitability of politics, this mystical element of Shiism is also political, and there is no actual difference between Shiite spirituality and Shiite politics. Moreover, it should not be neglected that the Islamic Revolution of 1979 is precisely a Shiite Revolution in Iran and is the very Shiite discourse. 1979 became an intellectual challenge to rethink the Shiism which was perceived previously as essentially initiatory, esoteric, and mystical, and quietist. According to the prevailing mystical perspective toward Shiism, "the initiatory knowledge is taught by the Imams in different fashions." The initiatory knowledge (*al-'ilm*), along with miraculous powers, constitute the main characteristics of the existence of Imams. "The imams say that their doctrine, which they often refer to as "the True Religion," contains all the esoteric mysteries of the universe as well as the answers to all questions about the domain

of the Sacred” (Amir-Moezzi 1994, pp. 9, 31). The question is that how a quietist *madhhab* gained the ability to actualize a politico-religious ideology and to justify seizing power by jurist-theologians, which is the principal political theory of Ruhollah Khomeini namely the doctrine of the power of the jurist (*wilāyat-i faqih*). Related to Iranian history, Khomeini took a bitter lesson from the Constitutional Revolution to never assimilate the Shiite clerical power in a coalition in which anti-clerical intellectuals and secular politicians have the dominance.

Khomeini’s whole notion of governance, embodied in the Shiite theological-political doctrine of *vilayat-i faqih*, is indeed a result of conditions particular to Iranian history. After a disillusioning attempt to institutionalize a role for the *ulama* in the legislative process during the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911, Khomeini had historical and political reasons to be suspicious of both constitutional guarantees for oversight and the real weight of legislative power (Keddie 1983, 579–598). He thus introduced a theory of government that would for the first time provide for *ulama* control of the executive branch. (Martínez 2014, p. 34)

The Islamic Revolution was almost a shocking historical incident against the prediction of scholars and politicians on the future of Shiism as a mystical and quietist Islamic *Madhhab*. While all the analysts agree with the role of religion as a catalyst in revolutionary movements, they failed to presume that the factor traditional Shiism can find its own functional position within the forces of opposition to the Pahlavi monarchy.

Now that the revolution has taken place ... the eyes of scholars are turned towards Qum and the newly-powerful ranks of the Shi’i *ulama* ... but it may be much to hope that sharp vision will replace shortsightedness overnights and that those unfamiliar with the dynamics of Shi’i piety and political messianism will readily grasp the principles and forces involved in this most medieval of all modern revolutions. (D. M. MacEoin 1979, p. 32)

The political Shiism is defined as the politicization of the theological and legal doctrines of Twelver Shiism in certain specific historical contexts, in order to make of these doctrines an ideology of legitimization of religious authority to seize the political power. The Shia clerics became more powerful in the recent history of Iran. They introduced themselves as the true and the legitimate controller for the King’s power. Then, we faced the crucial theoretical shift that claimed sovereignty of Islamic rules by the most eligible cleric. It is the Khomeinian shift in the Shiite discourse during recent history.

Related to the anti-political narration from Shia Islam, it should be pointed out that a significant part of the contemporary mystical interpretation from Shiism

lies in the speculations of Henry Corbin (1903–1978). Corbin was the prominent French philosopher and theologian who dedicated his entire life to research on Islamic and Iranian studies and being inspired mostly by Shihāb al-Din Yahyā Suhrawardi (1154–1191), the great Persian philosopher who founded the school of Illuminationism, as a kind reviving Zoroastrian teachings by using the Platonic doctrines. His mystical interpretations from Quranic verses became the source of seeking such spiritual roots in the Shiite teachings.

When a ray falls from the Holy Spirit, it is the type of word called a lesser word. Don't you see that God has said: He made the word of those who believed not to be abased, and the word of God was exalted? [Kor. 9:40] Even the infidels have words, because they have souls, but their words are mixed with sound. (Suhrawardi 1999, p. 17)

First of all, many of the mystical interpretations from the Semitic biblical sources, whether Jewish, Christian, or Islamic principal “Holy” texts, are arbitrary and disconnected from the historical context which is the primary hermeneutic base to build a consistent understanding of the text. In the mentioned verse, “the word” that is attributed to the infidels refers to the decision of the then “Pagan” nobles in Mecca to get rid of Muhammad by killing him. The verse is clear to devalue them and makes their decision unsuccessful by allegedly informing his prophet to escape from Mecca. Therefore, the “word” in the text is equal to the peculiar “decision” and refers to the failed assassination of Muhammad in 622 CE. Moreover, if there is any word that belongs to infidels, it is religiously void and is mere satanic. Therefore, what Suhrawardi perceived from the verse is detached from a Quranic perspective. The mentioned interpretation came from the prominent Islamic Shia scholar and a friend of Henry Corbin, i.e., Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (1903–1981) in his notable work of Quranic exegesis (Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i 2000). Moreover, al-Mawardi (972–1058 CE) as a prominent Islamic jurist and scholar in the Sunni world interprets the mentioned verse like Tabataba'i and indicates that Allah aimed to cut his divine guidance and to defeat the infidels by spreading fear in their souls and dedicating the victory to his own “word” (A. al-H. A. I. M. Al-Mawardi n.d.). Therefore, there is no reasonable hermeneutics for a mystical and humanistic interpretation as Suhrawardi did. In the Allah perspective, the word of an infidel is illegitimate and ungodly, whether it is mixed with sound or not. However, Corbin had a whole different esoteric perspective on Shia Islam, somehow without an adequate connection to Shiite history.

The Twelver Shī'ite conception corresponded much better to the metaphysical and spiritual essence of the Imāmate, implying a return of the 12th, hidden Imām (*ghaybāt*) on the Last Day. It is also certain that the sacred lineage of the theosophist sages and their Imām, or mystical *pole*, are no dynasty from this world, but are devoid of any competitive political power. They are rather like the dynasty of the guardians of the Grail compared to the official succession of the Apostolic See. Very possibly the idea of such a succession, entirely *incognito* and spiritual, does not appear as much as offensive, but even more dangerous and alarming in the eyes of powers whose only perspective is one where the derisive ambitions of power in this world square off against each other. (Corbin 2003, p. 13)

The incident of Karbala in the early Islamic history does not fit under the theosophist framework of Corbin and Husayn ibn Ali (625–10 October 680), the grandson of the Prophet, made his purpose clear to purify the Islamic Caliphate from the dust and the sinful deeds of the Umayyad caliph. In general, rethinking the early political precedence of Islam does not necessarily end to the conclusion that the orthodox narration misrepresents the early Islamic history. For, the orthodox perspective toward Islam is relatively more consistent with the actual motives of the Prophet, Caliphs, Imams, and other iconic figures in Islam. It does not mean that the claim of Husayn ibn Ali is necessarily true about the corruption and deviation of the Umayyad, for it goes under perspectivism in the early antagonist Islamic discourses about how should Muslims interpret and follow the heritage of the prophet. However, and regardless of the truthfulness, the very claim of Husayn makes it apparent that there was a recognizable political competition between the generation of Muhammad and their relatives in Umayyad caliphs. Otherwise, all the Shiite hatred against Umayyad had no reasonable grounds and is against the historical facts.

I see the rulers of the Umayyad dynasty (660–750) not as cynical manipulators of the outward trappings of the religious movement begun by Muhammad but as rulers who sought practical ways to realize the most important goals of the movement and who perhaps more than anyone else helped the Believers attain a clear sense of their own distinct identity and of their legitimacy as a religious community. Without the contributions of the Umayyads, it seems doubtful whether Islam, as we recognize it today, would even exist. (Donner 2010, p. xii)

Confronting this decisive historical period from a secular perspective can be pursued by offering a competitive source of inspiration as ethics and the natural rights of a man. It may seem like an abstract reform plan, but the arbitrary interpretation which has articulated during the last century by many Muslim intellectuals has not changed the Islamic mentality. Therefore, instead of portraying

Islam in our desired form, there should be a cultural movement to empower Muslims to find the courageousness of claiming their faith along with being detached from *the Islamic will to the power* in the early history of Islam. Denying the mentioned tendency without forming a new and comprehensive methodology in the hermeneutics of the Islamic sources, leads to reverse outcomes, to fortify Islamism, and to the rejection of any such religious intellectualism by the majority in the Muslim world. There was a precedent for such bravery and self-autonomy in Jewish history when Baruch Spinoza had been accused of confronting the Jewish orthodoxy and appealing to the superiority of ethics. Spinoza (2007) made a fundamental differentiation between mere religious dogmas and human virtues. He emphasized the vital role of reason to recognize and understand the moral essence of all faiths and theologies (pp. 188, 192). His unsophisticated endeavor to express unorthodox opinions proved that making a comprehensive alternative to the orthodox vindication is possible by acknowledging the importance of orthodox standpoint,⁸ which derives from the deep part of each religious history (Garrett 1995).

In the Western reform of Christianity, the philosophical speculation of Emmanuel Kant (1724–1804) is a spectacular case of explaining the meaning of being enlightened. The exit from the self-incurred immaturity (*selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit*) is only possible through courageousness to rely on one's own reason without the guidance of others (Kant 1784). All of Kant's teachings and ideas in the mentioned historical read are not opposed to the conservative philosophy. Briefly, human beings have no other choice except to trust their own understanding as regards all limitations of our rational and experimental perceptions. Self-autonomy can also be in conciliation with the wisdom of ancestors. Learning from our forefathers and the past is not contradicted with the necessity to discover or construct new ideas and practices based on contemporary challenges. The entire conservative philosophy is against any blind imitation, whether from ancestors or contemporaries, from religion or philosophy, from clergies or monarchs, from an alleged "old-fashioned" idea or "the newest Paris fashion of an improved liberty" (Burke 2003, p. 23). Thereupon, Kant in the same article with the main concern of educating the reason and the necessity to relatively cultivate our minds, warns against radical changes based on the conservative insight.

A public can only achieve enlightenment slowly. A revolution may well put an end to autocratic despotism and to rapacious or power-seeking oppression, but it will never

⁸ Section 4.3.4 is dedicated to the discussion of the defects and infertility of a mere denial position toward Islamic fundamentalism by self-named "religious intellectuals" in post-revolutionary Iran.

produce a true reform in ways of thinking. Instead, new prejudices, like the ones they replaced, will serve as a leash to control the great unthinking mass. (Kant 1991, p. 55)

The mentioned phrase is consistent with the critiques of pragmatic or utilitarian conservatives who, contrary to the traditional conservatism, did not believe in “an intrinsic value in established beliefs, practices and social hierarchies” (Kant 1991, p. 55). Reversely, they were skeptical about the unbounded faith of enlighteners in the ability of reason, and they criticized Kant peculiarly to be extremely concerned “with freedom at the expense of happiness” (Fleischacker 2013, p. 45).

Liberalization should come slowly, and work as much as possible from within the ways of life that ordinary people already inhabit, not be imposed from above by intellectuals working according to some abstract plan. Rehberg adds a measure of epistemic and moral theory to this point. He agrees that Kant is right to ground morality on an a priori principle, but insists that such a principle will need intermediary rules, bringing the a priori to bear on experience, and that only considerations of utility will enable us to specify these intermediary rules. (Fleischacker 2013, p. 45)

However, it is not completely clear that these kinds of critiques meet the connotations and implications of what Kant wrote. For, the political philosophy of Kant lies at a reasonable distance from those who abhorred the French Revolution and took his thoughts as their model of revolutionary wisdom. Kant is not historically considered within the category of the conservative philosophers, but he himself insisted on “slow political change and at least officially condemned revolution” (Fleischacker 2013, p. 45). Returning to Corbin’s reflections on Shiism, it is reasonable that the tragic life of Suhrawardi and the very Islamic execution which ended his life based on a *fatwā*, shows not only the conflict between the Juristic perspective and the Mystical perspective within the Islamic world but also proves the fundamentality of the very juristic entity of Islam. In this regard, *Islam contains not only Sharia but also Islam is the religion of Sharia*. Rodinson reminds illustrates that Allah communicates with human beings by a commercial language, speaking through a merchant to merchants (Rodinson 1971). That is why a fundamental reform can be realized through the language of truth, not the language of interpretation. When human beings still die in accord with a *fatwa*, there is a still-alive dreadful potentiality in the source of the *fatwa*. However, Corbin found the *takfir* against Suhrawardi as a religiously unjustified sentence based on his discovery of Shiite esotericism.

I know of no place where Suhrawardī has stated, in so many words, that God can create a prophet, a *nabī*, every time he wishes, even after the coming of him who was

“the Seal of the Prophets”. On the contrary, when the introduction of his great work on “Oriental Theosophy” refers to the secret succession in the sacred kinship of the theosophist sages (the *silsilat al-’irfān*) having its principle in the *qutb*, he who is their mystical *pole*, it presupposes the original Shī’ite idea of the cycle of *walāyat* ... It did not mislead the ‘*olamā*’ either. Certainly, they did not see, could not see, that the kinship of the *walyāt* cycle presupposes exactly that legislative prophecy as such is closed and that since then there will be no more prophet messengers. (Corbin 2003, pp. 12, 13)

The power of Islamic jurisprudence is constantly supported by the mentioned entity and the early image of religion, so it can find the Suhrawardi’s Quranic interpretation incompatible with Islam and sentenced him to death after almost six centuries since the religion had emerged. Thence, the criticism of Corbin to the clergies of Aleppo who made *takfir* to Suhrawardi by saying that they issued the death sentence “without mitigating circumstances” and that they interpret Suhrawardi’s thought out of its context, seems abstract, ahistorical, and disconnected from the inner logic and the religious pretexts of the mentioned *fatwa*. Corbin (2003) insists that there is “esoteric veracity (*haqīqat*)” which is intrinsically superior to the Sharia in Shiism. He himself was a skeptic for such an expectation from clergies to be prudent and to apply the principle of charity by asking himself that “how can we expect these from the accusers?” (p. 12). Moreover, Corbin accepted that Islam is considered as “a religion of law.” However, he did not step back from his interpretation that Sharia law cannot be applied without considering Shiite esoteric wisdom.

Ajoudani (2007) enlightens the implications of mystical totality in the philosophy of Suhrawardi which took *Wilaya* from its Shiite confinement to Imamas and extended it from a mystical perspective. Therefore, divine connectivity is explored into an unlimited realm. Ajoudani reminds us that Suhrawardi is among rare Iranians who recognized the relation of ancient Persian wisdom with Islamic mysticism and both with the idea of Iranian kingship. He professes that many constitutionalists in 1905–11, due to numerous theoretical confusions, failed to identify the mentioned historical continuity between the pre-Islamic era and post-Sassanid Iran (pp. 58, 59).

Eventually, it is needed to note that Corbin’s speculations on the “spiritual Shia Islam” along with other modern philosophers who had been critical to modernity, became the theoretical source to form a native Iranian anti-Western ideology under the name of *Westoxication* (1962). The ideological concept of *Westoxication* “played the founding role in the effort to articulate a local, Islamic modernity as a blueprint for revolutionary social change in Iran” (Mirsepassi 2011, p. 120).

The main founder of the term Westoxication, Ahmad Fardid (1912–1994),⁹ was inspired deeply by the philosophical spiritualism in the thoughts of Corbin.

Fardid felt a welcoming link and empowering new intellectual vision. It was possible to be a modern and fashionable intellectual—“cutting edge,” even—while also being fiercely critical of modern secular rationality, in the name of a traditional religious existence consigned to a bygone age of ignorance and superstition by the now “outdated” Enlightenment. (Mirsepassi 2017, p. 17)

Abdolkarimi (2010), scholar and intellectual, expresses that the young Fardid was under the influence of Henry Bergson (1859–1941) and his Heideggerian tendencies came later. Moreover, Abdolkarimi believes that Fardid was pessimistic about Western thought from his early engagement with philosophy. According to Abdolkarimi, the theoretical shift from Bergson to Heidegger and the interpretation of Heidegger in the light of the Iranian-Islamic wisdom are all rooted in the influence of Corbin. Therefore, Corbin is the main figure who directed the anti-Western thought of Fardid.

Concerning the connection of ideas with *realpolitik*, it is worth mentioning that the Pahlavi conservatism is being criticized for welcoming anti-modern critiques articulated by modern philosophers in the West and their followers in Iran. Some of those followers had close cooperation with the office of Empress Farah Pahlavi, like Sayyid Hossein Nasr (1933–)¹⁰ and Daryush Shayegan (1935–2018), the Iranian philosopher and intellectual. Reza Taqizadeh, a member of the Empress office, believed that the replacement of Nasr instead of Houshang Nahavandi (1930–)¹¹ was a tactical decision based on the emergence of the eve of a religious revolution (EmroozNama 2014). The royal court made itself somehow religionized to reduce the heat of the revolutionary boiler. Shayegan had

⁹ Sayyid Ahmad Fardid was an influential ideologue of the Iranian anti-Western nativism and a former dedicated professor of Tehran University.

¹⁰ Sayyid Hossein Nasr is an Iranian emeritus professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University and an Islamic philosopher. He belongs to the traditionalist school with prominent thinkers like René Guénon (1886–1951) and Frithjof Schuon (1907–1998). The main emphasis of traditionalists is on the crisis of the traditional form of knowledge and its annihilation under Western ontology. The traditional school defends the perennial wisdom of all religions which is considered as an antagonist of modernity. Both of the mentioned leaders converted to Islam, due to the basis of the school that Islam is the main, or only, remained esoteric tradition which is still acquirable by the West. Specifically, the teachings of Schuon shaped the speculative life of Nasr.

¹¹ Houshang Nahavandi is a former Iranian minister and an emeritus professor of political economy. He was the Minister of Development (1964–68) and Higher Education in 1978.

a remarkable knowledge about India and the East Asian religions (Shintoism, Sindoism, Taoism, and Confucianism), Indian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism) as well as the Christian and Islamic mysticism. He used all of the knowledge to express and justify a confrontation between the West and the East. The very confrontation was relatively a fact, but theorizing the confrontation and bringing a native ideology out of it was not just a descriptive reflection and had a normative part that belonged to the Iranian anti-Western intellectualism. Shayegan (1999) published his iconic work on the mentioned confrontation just one year before the Islamic Revolution. The terminology which he uses in the book is similar to the speeches of Ahmad Fardid, like “the decay of the Western civilization, “Westoxication” and “the inevitable and historical fate of the West” (pp. 3, 56). Shayegan is particularly important because of his academic study under the famous Orientalist scholar Henri Corbin and his presence in the weekly intellectual meeting in Tehran during the 1970s called “Fardidiyan Sessions” or discussions under the guidance of Fardid. Similarly, Shayegan observed the civilizations through the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and concluded that the separation between two different civilizations has led to the Western ontological hostile against the East (Mirsepassi 2011, p. 34). In this regard, Shayegan considered the West as an outset of any faith that is dominant and destructive to the Eastern traditions. The late Shayegan expressed his regret of all the time which he and his co-thinkers wasted in those Fardidiyan Sessions with anger, ignorance, insulting, hatred, and fight. Moreover, Shayegan expressed the lesson he took from Fardid as a bad model in the way of understanding the West. The arbitrary way of combining all the separate concepts taught Shayegan to recognize the permanent gap between civilizations and to respect the conceptual boundaries between different terms (Daryush Shayegan 1996). However, the belief about being in the Westernized “faithless world” and the nativist perspective of Shayegan (1999) that the Western nihilism subverted the human understanding from the divinity to the secular and that the fascination toward the West made the East as an unconscious and isolated civilization, led him to invest all of his credibility in Indian studies on the commemoration of Ayatollah Khomeini as “the Gandhi of Islam” (Taheri 2018).

Corbin or Shayegan show a less political version of this tendency—an anti-modern “religious” sensibility for the elite, who view mysticism or spiritual Islam more in terms of identity than political ideology. However, many from this elite Iranian group too enthusiastically welcomed the Islamic Revolution, believing it in harmony

with their predilections, and only later realizing how devastatingly wrong they were. (Mirsepassi 2017, p. 16)

In making a resemblance between a radical Shia clergy and an almost secular Hindu leader, Shayegan forgot that Gandhi “insisted strongly on a boundary between religious institutions and the affairs of the state” (Mirsepassi 2011, p. 159), and Khomeini was clear enough to express his will to constitute an Islamic state after the Shah. Theorizing the confrontation between the East and the West by those conservative and royalist intellectuals assisted the Islamic anti-Western ideology in a remarkable period of an unintentional partnership between antagonist forces in the intellectual atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s. In other words, The Iranian anti-Western intellectualism had a wide and diverse spectrum under its regressive nativism. The conception of Westoxication occupied the mentality of many prominent thinkers such as Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Daryush Shayegan, Ehsan Naraghi,¹² and Reza Davari. Naraghi was also an example of those semi-traditionalists who had an official connection with the office of Empress Farah Pahlavi and who claimed that “the then Western crisis is not an economic one, but it is a psychological, spiritual and social crisis and briefly it is a crisis of the Western civilization” (E. Naraghi 1975, p. 95). With all these considerations, the anti-Western discourse in the 1960s and 1970s assisted the political Shiism by focusing on the cultural authenticity, “Return to the Eastern self,” the faithlessness of the world (Darius Shayegan 1997), subservience to the West, rootlessness, Westoxication, Weststruckness and other nativist terms (Mirsepassi 2011).

As it is discussed in chapter 5, religious intellectualism believed in inferring modern ideas from the Islamic source in its early period from 1960–1990. The departure from their simplistic view which claims the possibility of deriving, e.g., democracy from the Quran is gone after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. However, defending a “religious democracy” was still the dominant reflection in their thought, as the prominent religious intellectual Abdolkarim Soroush (1945-) expressed that the problem of Shiite clergies with the Human Rights Declaration is its negligence about the creator and the religious ontology. He also claimed that in a religious society, a laic state is inherently undemocratic. He committed fallacy to call the Iranian majority “religious,” to keep the obscurity of the very term “religious” which is not necessarily like the same as “being adherent to Sharia” and to put his readers in confusion on the difference between secular policy and laic policy. Moreover, the mentioned opinions show a strong

¹² Ehsan Naraghi (1926–2012) was an Iranian sociologist, intellectual, and adviser of Empress Farah Pahlavi.

religiosity, i.e., extreme religious beliefs, in the Iranian Islamic thinkers. Eventually, Soroush proposes religious rhetoric to respect both divine rights and human rights in order to democratize the religious governments at the cost of neglecting liberal values (Soroush 1993).

In this regard, the Iranian traditionalist school and the Iranian followers of Henry Corbin like Daryush Shayegan were one step ahead of the so-called religious intellectuals. For, the first group never believed that democracy or other political modern concepts are derivable or even inspirable from the Islamic sources. Their philosophical confrontation with the Western ontology made it impossible to believe in any reconciliation between religious traditions, includes Islam, and modernity. For example, Shayegan in both of his speculative periods, before and after 1979, did not argue in favor of “religious democracy.” In the thoughts of the traditionalist school and followers of Corbin and Heidegger, democracy could not be a valuable purpose to achieve, and as a theoretical prerequisite, to justify it. The ancient virtues are beyond democracy, and the West defined and formed democracy against the perennial wisdom. In this matter, the Shah and the Shahbanu both used the mentioned orthodox attitude in favor of the justification of Pahlavi autocracy; Ahmad Fardid appeared on TV to connect the monarchical structure to the ancient Eastern wisdom. In a similar way and by the supposed support of Empress Farah, Sayyid Hossein Nasr established the Royal Society of Wisdom and Philosophy in 1974.

2.2.4 Young Khomeini and his *Kashf al-Asrār*, 1944

When Khomeini wrote his first theological and political treatise, he was 42 years old. The last Shah of Iran had come to power for three years, and the country had just passed the shock of invasion by Allies. The young Khomeini wrote *Kashf al-Asrār* (Unveiling of Secrets) in 1943. The book aimed to respond to the criticisms of Ali Akbar Hakimzadeh in his pamphlet titled *Asrar-i Hazārsāla* (The Thousand-Year Secrets) published in 1943. Hakamizadeh is considered one of Kasravi’s followers. He was a seminarist like Kasravi, and after the abandonment of his studies in Qom Seminary, Hakamizadeh published a critical journal titled Hodayat to support modernity in Iran and to spread the idea of Islamic reformism. In his book, he accused *ulama* of promoting superstitious practices and beliefs. More importantly, Hakamizadeh (1943) attacked the financial structure of Shiite clergies. Similarly, he rejected both ideas of the religious government and that *ulama*, i.e., fuqahā, have the right to rule (p. 28).

In the 1940s, Khomeini was still unknown and gained no more than a mid-rank cleric. However, he published *Kashf al-Asrār* in the form of a fierce condemnation against Kasavri, and his followers include Hakamizadeh. The book is formed by conservative clerical rhetoric against both religious reformists and secularists (Zahed 2017, p. 62). Khomeini's conservatism in this sense is only an indication of his purpose in preserving Shiite sentiments and the clerical establishment. Ironically, Khomeini had always revolutionary aggression to defend Shiism by his own interpretation. *Kashf al-Asrār* is the first book that expresses the political agenda of Khomeini. He asserted in his book that those who attack Islam are *mofsed fi al-arz*, corruptor on earth, and that "the scholars ... who see themselves as guardians of the faith, the Quran and the sacred religious beliefs, to shatter the teeth of these jerks with their iron fists and to crush their heads under their courageous feet" (Behdad 1997, p. 43). Additionally, Khomeini stresses that a truly Islamic government would "execute these offenders in front of the supporters of the faith" (Behdad 1997, p. 43). In 1944, he publicly wrote a letter to the *ulama* and people with the same title of one of Kasravi's iconic works against *Shiigari* (Shia-mongering), as a direct response of Khomeini (2012) to his assessments. In his open letter, Khomeini insulted Reza Shah as "uneducated," "orphan," and "depraved." He attacked the clerical passiveness and made his discontent on the subordinated Islamic world, condemned the anti-Islamic morality that is nothing but corruption in the society, and eventually, he warned *ulama* on their silence and weakness in front of heretic statements of Ahmad Kasravi.

Kashf al-Asrār is important due to its content which reasonably can be considered as the preparation of what Khomeini later in Najaf taught, which published as the textbook of *wilāyat-i faqih* during January-February 1970. In Najaf, Khomeini assigned thirteen lectures to the topic of the Role of the Guardian Jurist. It was published later with editions of Khomeini in Beirut, but copies of its content were already circulating in Iran. As SAVAK source reported on the 27 February 1970 that his "pamphlet on guardianship and the monarchy... had given copies to Iranians" (Adib-Moghaddam 2014, pp. 89, 90). His followers played the main role to transcribe and distribute his lectures in Iran.

In comparison to the latter, *Kashf al-Asrār* is mainly political, while *wilāyat-i faqih* is mainly theoretical. Although, Khomeini dedicated at least one chapter in his earlier work to the "government" and also did not himself confined to mere juristic debates in the latter. For example, in *wilāyat-i faqih*, Khomeini intentionally commits a fallacy reducing law to the Shiite jurisprudence and then concluding that the lawful government is a privileged position for *fuqahā* due to their alleged knowledge of the law, i.e., the Sharia (Khomeini n.d.-a, p. 46). In the same book, he devalues the Pahlavi monarchy as a "wretched state" and

ridicules the Shah. If the Shah was a Muslim monarch, “he ... would not need to go all the way to America and bow down before that ruffian’s desk, begging for help” (Khomeini n.d.-a, p. 31).

The content of *Kashf al-Asrār* is remarkable to illustrate the disappointment of Khomeini (n.d.-b) from Shiite seminaries and the passive clerical atmosphere, his own will to change Iran from modernization into Islamization and his self-confidence to insult and degrade the Pahlavi monarchy, though Khomeini published it anonymously as *A Letter from Imam Musavi Kashef al-Qeta*. However, considering the personality of Khomeini, which was expressed in *Kashf al-Asrār* demonstrates his will to fight the monarchy without any reluctance. The tone of *Kashf al-Asrār* is a combination of prudence and rage; he insists that *fuqahā* do not want to rule and there is no need that the Shah would be a *Faqih*, but the Shah is a military man who must respect *Sharia*, i.e., *Feqh* in accordance to a single section of the Constitution 1905. Relatedly, Khomeini (n.d.-b) demands the superiority of ulama in *Majlis-e Moassesān* (the constituent assembly). After the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Khomeini formed a thoroughly clericalized *Majlis-e Moassesān* and named it *Majlis-e Khobregān* (the Assembly of Experts). He positions himself as a defender of people’s will but with alignment to *Sharia*. It is the same political position of Khomeini on the eve of 1979. In *Kashf al-Asrār* he combined the alleged tyrannical rule of Pahlavi and its nullification of parliamentary participation with the vitality of Islamizing the country (pp. 181, 185).

Cumulatively, there are at least two essential lessons in *Kashf al-Asrār*, which give us a guideline to understand Khomeini’s character and the shift in his political theology. Firstly, the apparent sense of hatred and will of revenge against the Pahlavi dynasty. Secondly, the intentional theoretical obscurity to presumably hide his own will to build a theocracy; his articulations becloud the limit between the supervision of jurists and the guardianship of jurists. Khomeini pictures the monarch in *Kashf al-Asrār* as a subordinated ruler to the *Sharia*. In this regard, his lectures in Najaf under the title of the *wilāyat-i faqih* are a shift from his previous claim that *Fuqahā* do not want to rule, but only to supervise the power in order to be sure about the accordance of government with the Islamic laws. Nevertheless, all the premises of *wilāyat-i faqih* were already provided in *Kashf al-Asrār*: 1) the necessity of governance is obvious and does not need to be proved. 2) The human reason is defective, and its imperfectness is recognizable by its constant alterations. Therefore, the permanent and perfect source is only

the religion, i.e., Islam. 3) The right to rule belongs only to the divinity, i.e., Allah¹³, and that only Allah can build authority over people.

The fourth premise is denied or beclouded in 1943 and became clear only in his lectures in Najaf. 4) Allah grants his divine right to rule to the prophet, Infallible Imams, and in the time of occultation to the true representatives of the last Imam, i.e., *ulama*. In an ironic historical story, Khomeini complains in the first of *Kashf al-Asrār* about the indifference of Iranians and their refusal to support *ulama*. Similarly, he wished at the end of *Kashf al-Asrār* that one day Iranian people awake from their historical dream and punished the corrupted rulers. His wish actualized in 1979 and he started to purify the life of Iranians from what he called the *farhang-e taqut* (culture of idolatry). The keywords to understand the preparation of *wilāyat-i faqih* in 1943 is that Khomeini (n.d.-b) called the monarchic governance as an imperfect arrangement and the divine governance as a perfect one (p. 186). The missing link in his argumentation in *Kashf al-Asrār* was found by inferring the guardianship of the jurist from the alleged *hadīth* “The ‘ulama are the inheritors of the prophets” in his lectures of 1970. Khomeini (n.d.-a) differentiates between *ulama* and *Fuqahā*; the first are “merely a vehicle for the recording, collecting and writing down of traditions,” while the latter has knowledge of tradition and are “competent to express an independent opinion” and to teach the ordinances of Islam to the people (p. 39).

2.2.5 Shiite Conservatism and Political Shiism: Khomeini Against Clergies

The emergence of Khomeini as a political figure put the conservative clerics in disarray (Akhavi 1980). For, Khomeini’s approach was an obvious deviation from the quietist policy of Boroujerdi. That is why Khomeini never obtained vital support from *ulama* establishment until the ultimate crisis of 1978–79. After the death of Boroujerdi, the Royal Court tried to push the candidacy of the learned Muhsin al-Hakim (1889–1970) to hold the tenure of Boroujerdi as the head of Shiite seminaries in Iran. Hakim became the sole *marja* in 1961 after the death of Boroujerdi. Seemingly, the Shah assumed that a resident *mujtahid* of Najaf “be thought unlikely to be intimately aware of and concerned with the affairs of Iran” (Akhavi 1980, p. 102). The Royal Court was hoped to weaken the importance of

¹³ Bernard Lewis (1988) describes Allah in the most possible comprehensive way. “There was one God in heaven, who gave one law to mankind and established one ruler to maintain and enforce that law in his one community” (p. 46).

Qom and prevent the emergence of an institutionalized clerical power within Iran. However, Hakim stayed in Najaf until he died in 1970. Akhavi articulates that the Pahlavi monarchy did not proceed with its effort to manage the leadership of Qom, “trying steadfastly to ignore the affairs of what it increasingly termed ‘reactionary’ clergy” (p. 120). As Mirsepassi (1994) expresses, the absence of *marja al-taqlīd al-tām* (the sole source of emulation) provided an actual opportunity to expand public discussions on the nature of clerical leadership and Shiite religious establishments in the then socio-political context.

Immediately after the death of Ayatollah Borujerdi in 1961, a group of politically minded Shi’i clerics and lay intellectuals took advantage of the vacuum ... the clerical activists and politically oriented religious intellectuals of Iran perceived the lack of internal resistance to their political program. They were prepared to launch a campaign to politicize the Shi’i clerics and to formulate a political theory compatible with Iranian society that would also fulfill their own political objectives. (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 69)

However, emphasizing the vital and decisive importance of related publications, like *Maktab-e Tashayyo* (School of Shiism) is reasonable as reviewing the mutation of the political culture in a small circle of young clergies and anti-Shah intellectuals. However, its public influence on the majority of Iranians is questionable and its role, along with other similar publications, to determine the orientation of Revolution 1979 is doubtful. Seemingly, focusing on the cultural participation of the famous Islamic Center, the *Hosseiniyyeh Ershad*, in northern Tehran in incoming revolutionary rage at the end of the 1970s would be more convincing to infer that “turning point in Shi’i intellectual activities” influenced the mentality of Iranians. Regardless of the disputability of some premises of Mirsepassi’s significant article *The Crisis of Secular Politics and the Rise of Political Islam in Iran*, as it is discussed in section 3.3.1 under the assessment of Iranian libertarianism, the drawn conclusion relatively meets the totality of the complicated post-Reza Shah period in Iranian history.

One of the ironic lessons of the Iranian experience is the extent to which the autocratic state power of the Shah, on the one hand, and the secular opposition forces, on the other, contributed to the political and cultural formation of the Islamic movement in the country. The Pahlavi state contributed by suppressing all forms of secular democratic politics, and the secular opposition contributed to the hegemony of the Islamic movement by romanticizing it, obscuring the nature of Shiism, and supporting the clergy. At the same time, one should not underestimate the fact that the Shi’i clergy made an unwavering effort to construct a political ideology and organize a

viable movement which was imagined to be suitable to the realities of modern life in Iran. (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 79)

As an example of the essential difference between the political personality of Khomeini and the theoretical priorities of other prominent Shiite clergies, it is vital to mention the precedence of long Shiite pedagogical endeavors to confront communism in Iran. After the birth of the Tudeh Party which had occupied the Iranian public for at least a decade, many Shiite ulama concentrated and invested in providing a counter-campaign that waged in opposition to increasingly Tudeh dominance. The most expressive response to the extensive intellectual presence of the Tudeh Party was the efforts of ‘Allāmah Sayyid Mohammad Hossein Tabataba’i (1903–1981).¹⁴ He confronted the propagation of Tudeh’s “scientific philosophy” by organizing regular private weekly sessions, lecturing on the characteristics of Islamic philosophy in comparison to Marxism. These lectures were published later (1953–1985) in 5 volumes with detailed footnotes and commentaries of his close disciple Morteza Motahhari (1919–1979).¹⁵ His book *Usūl-e Falsafeh va Ravesh-e Realism* (The principles of philosophy and the method of realism), which has become a major reference for modern Islamic philosophy. The entire work can be considered as a joint theoretical partnership with Tabataba’i (Davari 2005). The introduction of the mentioned work illustrates that many principal sources of Western philosophy are being translated in our time and the Iranian youths express zealous curiosity to learn Western thought, which is a sign of seeking truth in Iranian nature for centuries. However, the Mutahhari directed the exact cause by adding that “the publications equipped by political and party propaganda about the new materialist philosophy (Dialectical Materialism)” became the forcing motivation of Tabataba’i to start his weekly sessions (Mohammad Hossein Tabataba’i n.d., p. 13). The content of all volumes is abstract in comparison with weekly sessions of Ruhollah Khomeini in the early 1970s in Najaf under the title of *wilāyat-i faqih*. There is no considerable evidence that Khomeini was ever obsessed or anxious about the

¹⁴ Muhammad Hossein Tabataba’i was one of the most prominent Shiite figures in the field of Islamic philosophy and contemporary Shia Islam. He is famous for *Tafsir al-Mizan*, a twenty-seven-volume work of Quranic exegesis, which he worked on from 1954 until 1972.

¹⁵ Morteza Motahhari was a prominent cleric, Islamic philosopher, lecturer, and political activist. He is one of the main disciples of Ayatollah Khomeini and is considered the ideologue of the Islamic Republic. He formed the Council of the Islamic Revolution (CIR) at Khomeini’s request during 1978–79. He was chairman of the mentioned council at the time of his assassination by a militant group that promoted a Shia anti-clerical Islamist ideology. Their name, *Forqān*, had taken from a Sura of the Quran and means the divine criterion to separate right from wrong.

communist activities in Iran. Ostensibly, he had a realistic estimation of the social tendency in Iran and the supposed little chance of communist ideology to obtain the attention of the public. It is vital to emphasize on his characteristics and concerns as a former political activist and a later politician. While Tabataba'i and Muthahari were occupied with preparing a counter-Islamic philosophy in front of Marxism, Khomeini was teaching the principle of clerical guardianship in exile. In general, Khomeini was the man of politics and his ability to identify the then actual circumstances without falling into abstract analyses is exceptional in Shiite history.

On the eve of the anti-Shah revolution, the news shocked all political actors in the scene of Iran; "Imam Musa Sadr is disappeared after the departure for Libya on 25 August 1978." Musa Sadr (1928-) was a prominent Lebanese-Iranian Shia clergy. The origin of his family roots in the Jabal Amel in Lebanon, which is one of the iconic regions as a residency of many remarkable Shiite scholars in history. Sadr achieved significant popularity in Lebanon. He is described as one of the last hope of the Shah to confront Khomeini by a mixture of traditional clerics with new well-known and reputed clergy like Musa Sadr. "Both the Shah and SAVAK had been shocked by Sadr's disappearance. Despite a deep tension between Sadr and Tehran, unrelenting waves of demonstrations had prompted Tehran to reconsider its policy toward the Shia ulama" (Reisinezhad 2019, p. 297). Tehran indirectly accused Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters of being responsible for Sadr's disappearance. In comparison to the devastating propaganda of Khomeini after the tragic incident of Cinema Rex, it is discussed in sections 3.3.2 and 4.2, the indirect accusation of the Shah in Sadr's affair can be considered as an example of weak domestic propaganda of the Pahlavi monarchy. In a meeting of 2 October 1978 with William H. Sullivan, the last U.S. ambassador to Tehran, and Anthony Parsons, the UK ambassador to Tehran, Iranian Prime Minister Jafar Sharif Imami claimed that Sadr had agreed with Tehran to break with Khomeini and announce his support for the Shah. What Sullivan uttered in this regard can represent the complexity of Sadr's disappearance.

If the wily Imam had indeed made a deal with the GOI [Government of Iran], while at the same time allegedly acting as a channel for Libyan funds being sent to Khomeini, this fact could be a contributing element in his disappearance. I would imagine that Colonel Gaddafi does not appreciate being double-crossed. (Reisinezhad 2019, p. 298)

There are many rumors about the conflict between Sadr and Khomeini, but it seems that Imam Sadr should be considered as a member of the revolutionary

coalition with a positive and simplistic view about its democratic potential. In other words, Sadr relied more on the abstraction of “revolutionary change” and had no such anti-Shah motivation. Nevertheless, the important assumption is his disagreement with the doctrine of Khomeini, i.e., *wilāyat-i faqih*. They both also disagreed over the Palestinian cause. Considering the major mutual disagreement, Sadr could be a chance for the Shah with all of the obscurities and conspiracy theories that surround Sadr’s agenda and his mysterious disappearance. In the early months after the revolution of 1979, Khomeini faced severe objections from the traditional clerics against the sovereignty of the jurist. There are old conflicts between the interpretations of the verses related to the true Islamic authority. The debate is about the extension, borders, and also the meaning of the religious sovereignty peculiarly during the occultation.

As we have seen, Khomeini’s theory of theocratic government extends the Shi’ite norm of juristic authority as elaborated in the nineteenth century into a new sphere previously not covered by it: government. From the Shi’ite point of view, this theory is open to two forceful objections. The first is that the mandate or authority of the Shi’ite ‘ulama during the Occultation of the twelfth Imam cannot be extended from the religiolegal to the political sphere. The second objection is that the mandate in question refers to the collective authority of all Shi’ite jurists and cannot be restricted to that of a single supreme jurist nor, by extension, to a supreme council of three or five jurists. The above doctrinal objections to *velayat-e faqih* were voiced by a number of *maraji’-e taqlid* and other *ayatollahs*. (Amir Arjomand 1988, p. 180)

It should be pointed out that the differentiation between moderate clerics and radical clerics is not a firm categorization and the collective clerical interests, concerning the Shiite establishment and the Shiite expansionism, makes the mentioned distinctness fragile. The historical example is the “miscalculation” of SAVAK in the 1970s to use Ali Shariati in order to actualize a dual purpose; the devaluation of both clerics and Marxists. His efficiency to form and present his arbitrary ideas made all sides confused about him; his religious slogans presented him as a “devout believer” and his confrontation with the clerical conservatism pictured him as an “anticlerical innovator who presented his secular alien ideas within an Islamic garb—that is, a modern Malkum Khan.” His anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism labeled him as “Islamic Marxist,” while he introduced himself as a radical theorist inspired by political Shiism (Abrahamian 1982, p. 467). Nevertheless, the SAVAK and the government even received the right impression from his zealous speeches as a “danger,” but the widespread optimism about the clerical orientations drove them into a self-created trap.

The government had failed to understand that the ulama were divided into revolutionary and conservative wings; that a considerable number of progressive young ulama supported Shariati's cause in principle, even though they disagreed with him in ideological and methodological details. (Abedi 1986, p. 232)

The conservative tradition has some fundamental overlaps with Khomeini's ideology. The "traditional" clergies were against him, and simultaneously they could not confront him entirely, while Khomeini was claimed the very historical essence of Shiism and just made some crucial changes to give birth to his political theology. The apolitical and pious aspect of Shiism was not an inherent part of it, and the Shiite community took it as a temporal tactic to survive under Sunni Caliphates. However, the spirit of Islamic theology is that governance is firstly a divine right, which can be transferred to God's representatives and indirectly to God's servants, i.e., citizens in modern terms. Khomeini made it possible that the mentioned theological spirit became embodied in the form of his Shiite ideology. That is why many conflicts between him and other senior clergies can be interpreted as a personal competition in realpolitik, instead of being a fundamental difference in their Shiite theologies.

A clear and tragic example of a confrontation between revolutionary Shiism and traditional ones could be seen in the story of Grand Ayatollah Shari'atmadari. Shari'atmadari had the strongest support among the Turkish population of Azerbaijan, i.e., almost thirty percent of the then population of Iran (Beeman 2005). Moreover, he founded the *Dar-al-Tabligh*, in the mid-sixties in Qom as a center to research Islam based on almost new methods (Fischer 2003). The aim was to make *tullāb* familiar with humanities and to develop the traditional Islamic studies in the Shiite seminaries. He favored the traditional Shiite practice of keeping clerics away from political positions. Although, on the eve of the Islamic Revolution Shari'atmadari chose equivocal rhetoric and then prudently accepts the revolutionary leadership of Khomeini. Homayoun (2007) categorized both under the "religious right" force in the crisis 1978–79, though Homayoun labels Khomeini as the radical religious right and Shari'atmadari as the moderate religious right. However, he believes that both Grand Ayatollahs were standing relatively on the same side against the Shah (p. 8). In general, it is true that he "was acknowledged to be the chief clerical leader of the revolution residing within Iran during the events leading to the fall of the shah" (Beeman 2005, p. 76).

In 1963, he prevented the Shah from executing Ayatollah Khomeini by recognizing him as a Grand Ayatollah, since a *Marja* (the highest rank in the clerical Shiite stratum) could not be executed, according to the Iranian constitution 1905.

Khomeini was forced into exile instead. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, he criticized the idea of “leadership of the jurist,” i.e., *wilāyat-i faqih*, and also denouncing the hostage of diplomats at the US embassy in Tehran, which Khomeini named as the second revolution. He “opposed Khomeini’s doctrine of rule by the chief jurisprudent, spoke out against the war being waged against the Kurds, and in general served to embarrass the new regime” (Beeman 2005, p. 77). It made him a target of intelligence agents who sought to silence and eliminate him from the social and political arenas. In 1982 he was accused of being part of a coup d’état to bomb Khomeini’s home and to overthrow the Islamic state. The security forces of Khomeini tortured him and forcibly took a confession from him to accept not just having “knowledge” of the coup, but also actively supporting and financing it. He remained under house arrest and detained until his death in 1986 due to cancer that never let to be cured by surgery. The security agents buried him without any rites or ceremonies, and his body was carried in secret and in an improper cemetery. His final assessment of Khomeini and his *wilāyat-i faqih* was that “the hard line religious leaders have discredited themselves and the idea of a theocracy” (Fischer 2003, p. xxxiv).

His son Hasan Shari’atmadari expresses the history of two Ayatollahs in a different way. According to his narration, after the harsh reaction of the Shah against what he called “criminals who committed the 1963 demonstrations will be sent to the drumhead court-martial (*dādghāh-e Sahrāey*)”, he sent a middleman to Ayatollah Shari’atmadari in order to provide arrangements of releasing Khomeini from the prison. In other words, the Shah did not want to execute Khomeini as a prominent religious provoker of the then demonstrations, because the execution of a *mujtahid* would put the Shah in domestic and international trouble. Therefore, the result was by the request and agreement of the Shah. He also denied any accompaniment to the anti-Shah revolution by his father. Instead, Hasan Shari’atmadari asserted that his father never addressed the Shah in his declarations and just referred to the then administration (*heyāt-e Hākemeh*) demanding the necessity of reform. In this narration, the crucial claim of Ayatollah Shari’atmadari is to revive the spirit of the Persian Constitution of 1906. Although, it seems that Ayatollah Shari’atmadari as a Shiite senior clergy declared his constitutional demand with the Islamic tone. On 18 May 1978, “Ayatollah Shari’atmadari warned that there would be no peace in the country until the Shah acceded to Muslim demands for the formation of a constitutional government” (Nikazmerad 1980, p. 330). Hasan Shari’atmadari indicates that Khomeini had three private meeting with his father; two of them was formal, and Khomeini was never discussing politics, due to his plan keeping Ayatollah Shari’atmadari out of the political affairs. The third meeting was intensive and threatening, for Khomeini warned him to bomb Azerbaijan

if the then uprising is continued. The most important claim in his interview is that the isolation of Khomeini due to a disputation between Khomeini and the Grand Ayatollah Hossein Boroujerdi Tabataba'i (1875–1961), the leading *marja* in Iran from 1947 to his death, due to the support of *Fedā'īān-e eslām* by Khomeini which was against the quietist approach of Boroujerdi. The conflict resulted in eight years of being isolated in Qom until the death of Boroujerdi (Shari'atmadari 2019).

[*Fedā'īān-e eslām*] can and should be regarded as the forerunners of the Islamic revolutionaries ... Khomeini himself had admired the group and temporarily broke with the leading Shi'ite dignitary Ayatollah Boroujerdi when the latter refused to intercede with the Shah to save the life of their leader. (Amir Arjomand et al. 1984, p. 11)

Amir Arjomand (1984) indicates that the prominent display of Navvab Safavi's portrait was in Khomeini's house in 1979. Moreover, Sadeq Khalkhali "the Judge Blood of the Islamic Revolution" was an old member of *Fedā'īān-e eslām*. It should not be neglected a historical fact in the published American documents, to understand the role of the Shiite hierarchy on the eve of the Islamic Revolution. It indicates that the Shah was shocked and depressed with the outcome of the religious demonstrations in early 1978. Hedayatollah Eslaminia (1928–1984), an official of the government, reported to Americans as follows:

The Shah and his principal advisors were now convinced that compromise with religious leaders may not be possible ... it is clear that the throne is taking a much tougher line against dissidents in the wake of Shariatmadari's inability or unwillingness to oppose Khomeini publicly. (Byrne 2005, p. 136)

The collective interest of Shiite clergies is discussed in various parts of the thesis. In this case, denouncing Khomeini in public was not an easy task even for Ayatollah Shari'atmadari. For, Ayatollah Khomeini had his own followers and disciples. In the then time, he provided his military network in the region and had aimed to hold the revolutionary leadership. When Shari'atmadari and his supporters increased their dislike for Khomeini, on 21 July 1978, by opposing his call to politicize the celebration of the 12th Imam's birthday, pro-Khomeini groups started to blackmail Shari'atmadari. On the eve of the crisis in 1978, according to the memoirs of Empress Farah Pahlavi, Ayatollah Shari'atmadari gave a blacklist to the Shah, full of the names of pro-Khomeini radical clergies includes Sadeq Khalkhali (1926–2003) who executed many officials of the Ancien Régime later, and asked His Majesty to arrest them promising that the

then crisis will be solved.¹⁶ However, the Shah refused to apply the demand of Ayatollah and sought a political solution instead of intensifying the security policy (F. Pahlavi 2003, p. 269). The American report in 1978¹⁷ described the Shah's domestic policy as an "unrealistically unyielding posture in his negotiations with the opposition" (Byrne 2005, p. 231).

Khomeini used all the possible means to suppress the traditional clerics. He believed in the supremacy of the political goals which legitimize any tools to reach them. The dissident high-rank clerics, ayatollahs, were decisively suppressed in the spring of 1982. After the degradation of Grand Ayatollah Shari'atmadari in April 1982, Khomeini's doctrine was reached a new level of propaganda in the media. They promote the theory of the sovereignty of the jurist by publishing the wills of the "martyrs" of the so-called holy war against Iraq. The newspapers started to publish the martyrs' profession of faith in Khomeini, his teachings, and his militant followers as *Hezbollah* (the party of God). The famous slogan in that time coined to assert on his demand as a *de facto* single-party state, or divine single-party, and to insist on his own uncompetitive leadership; *hezb faghat hezbollah, rahbar faqat Ruhollah* (The party is only God's party, and the leader is only Khomeini). "Statements to the effect that obedience to the 'ulama as "those in authority" is incumbent upon the believer as a religious duty were often excerpted from the will and made into headlines in bold letters" (Amir Arjomand 1988, p. 180). The official media was showing many movies of Iranian soldiers who were holding the picture of Imam Khomeini on their weapons or official uniforms. The Islamic regime focused on their ideological testaments for supporting the leader and the idea of the sovereignty of the jurist. Even the last official public statements of Khomeini to the ulama and Shiite seminaries on 21 February 1989, he degrades his dissident clergies as *akhūndhaie mortaje*' and the regressiveness is not the only attribution to them. Moreover, Khomeini (2018) devaluates them as illiterate clergies who have no true knowledge of Islam and whose obligation is only to promote American Islam, i.e., the falsified Islam in favor of the West.

¹⁶ Sabeti (2012), an Iranian lawyer and former SAVAK deputy, expresses his narration of the turmoil during 1978–79. Just like Ayatollah Shari'atmadari, he also asked the Shah to resist the revolutionary rage by arresting all the leading figures and pro-Khomeini clergies (pp. 428–474).

¹⁷ The report of George W. Ball with the title "Issues and Implications of the Iranian Crisis".

Regarding the politics of lying or *taqiyya* in Khomeini's life, Mehdi Haeri Yazdi (1923–1999)¹⁸, as an unofficial mediator between Khomeini and Americans during 1978–79, advised Khomeini to step back from his idea of the Islamic government because “it is not practical in our time” (Fattahi 2019). In a letter on 13 January 1979, Khomeini answered him by accepting his advice and by asserting that the idea of the Islamic Republic is impossible to be realized and that he himself does not intend to take any political position in the future of Iran. On 12 January 1979, Khomeini told Americans that the Islamic Republic will not confront the United States and will not export its own revolutionary Islam to the region. However, Khomeini supported the Iran hostage crisis and named it “the second revolution,” which lasted 444 days from 4 November 1979. Haeri Yazdi narrated all the incidents with a bitter tone that Khomeini had already his own plan to pave the way for *wilāyat-i faqih*. Even during his exile in Najaf as an isolated clergy, he formed his own regional militant network and domestic terrorist ties (Samaei SahnehSaraei et al. 2016). Empress Farah Pahlavi (2003) expresses in her memoirs that many officers, ministers, and members of the Assembly include their families had received messages of a death threat, and she adds that many of them were executed after the downfall of the monarchy (p. 283). In 1978–79, the then-established political institution had a vital role in protecting Iranian citizens from brute revolutionary force through legal institutions. After the torching of Cinema Rex on 19 August 1978, the government had an urgent both moral and contractual obligation to prevent the planned wave of terror, for “the state protects its citizens from brute force through legal institutions” (Marcuse and Popper 1985, p. 78).

The conflict between Khomeini and his dissident clergies demonstrates the narrowness of any differentiation between moderate and radical clergies. Theoretically, Khomeini himself, like many of his followers, was unintentionally affected by the egalitarian presumptions of the modern era. That is why he always tried to justify the inferiority of women in Islam by referring to those Islamic laws which put men and women in an equal position (Khomeini 2001). It demonstrates the view of the great French classical liberal Raymond Aron, as summarizes by Ahmari, “even liberalism’s enemies tend to frame their objections using the rights-based talk associated with liberalism” (Ahmari 2017a, para. 24). As another example, there was a controversial debate concerning Article 12 of the constitution in 1979; it identified Iran as a Twelver Shii *Ithna-‘ashari* state. The debate

¹⁸ Mehdi Haeri Yazdi was a Shia clergy and professor of Islamic philosophy. He is the first son of Shaikh AbdolKarim Haeri Yazdi, the founder of Qom Seminary and teacher of Ruhollah Khomeini.

on this topic in *Majlis-e Khebrgān* (the Assembly of Experts) became intensive. Regardless of disagreement by Sunni deputies, the overwhelming majority voted to declare Twelver Shiism as the state religion in Iran. However, it was not quite satisfactory for more traditional clergies.

In less than a week a select number of Tehran ulama submitted a letter of protest to Ayatollah Khomeini objecting to what they believed to be only a passing reference to Shiism and asked for a stricter wording. Their revision (not adopted by the Assembly) would have declared Twelver Shiism as the true Islam. The group was so adamant that the Assembly of Experts was forced to defend itself against the charge that it had slighted Shiism. (Sanasarian 2000, p. 17)

Therefore, there was some combination between traditional and radical in the reaction of those Shiite clergies against the alleged passiveness of Ayatollah Khomeini to declare Shiism as the official “true Islam” which would result in more sectarian conflictions between Shias and Sunnis. All of these examples do not make Khomeini more moderate than his “orthodox” dissidents. Political moderation is a virtue of conservatism, and Khomeini has no considerable records in his reign to be called “moderate.” Khomeini himself was both a pragmatist and a principalist, but his most superior principle was to keep the power, and it suited his pragmatism. He justified his Shiite Machiavellian politics by his political theology. In his narration, the Islamic Republic is the representative of Allah’s governance, and there is no principle over preserving this government, and he asserted, even Sharia cannot dominate the highest expediency of defending the Islamic Republic against any domestic and international treats. At the same time, his pragmatism was not rational and worked as a part of Khomeini’s instrumentalist approach to politics. In this regard, the religion subordinated to his policy, and the politics subordinated to serve his totalitarian ideology. Therefore, Khomeini was more a political leader than a proficient politician. He often used his charismatic power without deliberation on consequences. Serving the revolutionary ideology was his only purpose, which should be actualized at any expense. That is why Khomeini provoked the Shiite Iraqis against the government after 1979, as a part of its pan-Islamic mission which confronted the Arab nationalism under Saddam Hussein (1937–2006). By appealing to the same mission, he prolonged the war after the liberation of Khorramshahr on 24 May 1982 for the next six years with unprecedented casualties and harm.

On 21 June [1982], a day after Saddam’s peace proposal, Khomeini indicated that an invasion of Iraq was imminent, and the following day Chief-of-Staff Shirazi vowed to ‘continue the war until Saddam Hussein is overthrown so that we can pray at [the

holy Shi'ite town of] Karbala and Jerusalem'. On 13 July a large-scale offensive was launched in the direction of Basra, the second most important city in Iraq. (Karsh 2002, pp. 36, 37)

Eventually, Khomeini had no choice except to end his “holy defense” and accept the peace in 1988. On 18 July, Khomeini accepted what he referred to as a ‘poisonous chalice’ and signed the UN Security Council Resolution 598 on a ceasefire agreement. Similarly, his absurd *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie (1947-), a British Indian novelist and essayist, is considered as an aspect of what can be called “revolutionary pragmatism.” In his sense, the political pragmatism of Khomeini was not pursued to meet the national interests of Iran, while he was not a nationalist, but simply he was an Islamist leader. The mass execution of political prisoners started on 19 July 1988 was also part of his pragmatism. The authoritarian characteristic of Khomeini formed Shiite totalitarianism, and all supposed pragmatic policies were aligned with the ideological expression and the conservation of power. The juristic debate between Hussein Ali Montazeri (1922–2009)¹⁹ and Khomeini came out of the conflict between an adherent disciple to Sharia and an adherent master to power (Schwerin 2015, pp. 105–112). The fragility of referring to Sharia to stop the arbitrary execution of thousands of life lies in consideration of both sides; Montazeri appeals to details of *feqh* in order to negate the bloody *fatwa*, and Khomeini appeals to the teleological purpose of *feqh* in order to affirm his issued political order in the form of a religious rule (Ayatollahi 2016). In the administrative issue, *Majma'-e Ta'skhīs-e Maslahat-e Nezām* (The Expediency Discernment Council) is both consultative and executive wing of the *walī-i faqih* to apply his own will in the emergencies like the irreconcilable conflict between *Majlis* and *Shūra-ye negahbān-e qānūn-e āsāsī* (The Guardian Council of the Constitution). In other words, the Expediency Discernment Council is beyond the parliamentary legislation and the clerical jurisprudence; it is the pragmatist body of actualizing revolutionary ends.

The analysis of Khomeini's juristic instrumentalism negates the propaganda of reformists picturing him as a modernist jurist just by referring to his unprecedented innovation in *feqh*. For example, his famous debate with one of his followers, Mohammad Hasan Qadiri, in which Khomeini defended his own issued

¹⁹ Ayatollah Montazeri was a senior Shiite jurist and one of the most prominent clergies in the formation of the Islamic Republic. He was one of the leaders of the Revolution in 1979. Montazeri was designated as the successor to the revolution's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini. Due to the political conflictions on the war policy with Iraq, human rights, and other disputable issues, related to the clerical competitions and the Iran–Contra affair, Khomeini denounced him on 28 March 1989.

fatwa on the conditional allowance of chess, is full of indications of the superiority of the Islamic state over the Islamic jurisprudence (Khomeini 2010). His reminding of the implications of “the new civilization” is nothing but a caution to the necessity of conserving the power utilizing the juristic flexibility, which makes the guardian jurist more powerful to apply his will. In other words, the alleged juristic innovation of Khomeini is coherently conceived as part of his *totalitarian political theology*. Therefore, the main issue lies in his theology than his jurisprudence. It is discussed in sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.1 about the impossibility to consider a specific social contract between Iranians and the Islamic Republic due to its practical adherence to the political theology of Khomeini implies the right of the jurist to invalidate the social contract one-sided under the excuse of the expediency of Islam, i.e., the Islamic power of jurist. Inspiring from what Hegel means by *schlechte Unendlichkeit*, it can be considered that the political theology of Khomeini became a symbol of ‘bad infinity’ in contemporary Iran. It opposed itself to the finite due to its totalitarian characteristic. As Hegel proposes, the confronting feature makes infinity finite (Magee 2010, pp. 93–95). The *bad secularization* of the Islamic jurisprudence during the process of actualization of Khomeinism is identified through its destructive confusion of the secular with divinity. Therefore, both the heavenly and the earthly are affected by the Shiite envious will to the power.

It should be noted that a mere conflict between Khomeini and “traditional” clergies does not make one side a moderate and the other side a radical. The relativity of mentioned terms is determined only in a specific historical context and in most of them, Khomeini was a proclaimer of all paradoxes one can even imagine; the advocator of Shiite juristic dynamics (*feqh-e pūyā*) or Shiite juristic expediency (*feqh-e maslahat*) and the defender of Sharia laws within the framework of classical Shiite jurisprudence (*feqh-e javāheri*). In all of these claims, the Shiite survival distinct is the first and the last priority in the political theology of Khomeini; to seize power and then to keep it at any costs, even by suspending the principal elements of Islam like a prayer. His debate with the then president, later the supreme leader after his death, i.e., Ali Khamenei, is assertive enough to represent the political theology of Khomeini which considers *wilāyat-i faqih* as a part of the *wilāyat-i motlaqeh* (the unconditional guardianship of the prophet) as the first and only principal goal of Islam (Khomeini and Khamenei 2013). Therefore, the Islamic state has the divine authorization from Allah, inherited it from Muhammad, to suspend all the secondary Islamic laws like prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. In this considerable letter, Khomeini is clear to present *wilāyat-i faqih* as the continuation of the *wilāyat-i motlaqeh* which a divine authority delegates to prophet and Imams and subsequently bestowed on *Fuqahā*. Cumulatively, the

factor of expediency in the jurisprudence of Khomeini is only part of his political theology which dominates politics over religion; the capacity of Islam as a political religion made him able to make religion inferior in comparison to the prioritized religious politics.

All we are obliged to protect the interests of Islam and because the most important duties is to preserve the Islamic system if there is a conflict in practice between it and the other religious orders placed sentences must be sacrificed in the province. ... The legal contracts can be revoke that are related to the public when the contract is against the interests of the country and Islam unilaterally ... In Islam, the expediency is of the issues that take precedence over everything and everyone must obey it. (Samaei SahnehSaraei et al. 2016, p. 111)

With all these considerations, it is doubtful to consider this kind of theo-political totality as the process of secularization of Sharia. Moreover, as it is discussed in section 2.2.2, emphasizing the role of *aql* (reason) as a source of juristic perception in Shiism is a magnifying cliché with negligence of the literalist aspect of the Shiite jurisprudence; it has an instrumentalist approach toward the reason, and the superiority remains under the scripture and Shaira. As Sadeghi-Boroujerdi (2019) explains the ideas of Saeed Hajjarian (1945-),²⁰ it is true that “the subordination of religious injunctions to the state by Khomeini... triggered the ‘re-enchantment’ (*baz-afsun*) of the political order in the short term”, but the skeptic point comes when it is considered as the long-term process of secularization which will erode the ideological dogmas due to prioritizing “the mundane exigencies of state administration” (pp. 350–352). The means-end or goal-oriented rationality (*‘aqlaniyyat-e hadaf vasileh*) can simply empower the foundations of a totalitarian system even when some ideological dogmas are replaced with others. The reduction of dogmas in the Islamic Republic to mere of the classical jurisprudence cannot represent the complex ideologies in the Khomeinism, which is embodied in the then government. The *bad governance* of the Islamic Republic cannot be removed by empowering the instrumental rationality of its bureaucracy. For, bureaucracy serves only the interest of rulers in totalitarian regimes and the rationalization of bureaucracy is not as the same as the rationalization of the Khomeinism, that is to say, the transformation of Islamic ideology to a “normal” idea of the ruling. According to Hegel’s philosophy, the alleged secularization of the Shiite jurisprudence under the dominance of Khomeini’s political theology can be considered as the *bad profaneness* [*schlechte Weltlichkeit*] which brings

²⁰ Saeed Hajjarian is the most prominent ideologue of reformist discourse under the Islamic Republic. He is a journalist and former intelligence officer.

insanity instead of rationality and rage instead of order (Hegel 1986, pp. 512, 535, 536). Eventually, it results in bad governance and the deviation from the benevolent understanding of political power.

After the denouncement of Ayatollah Montazeri as the only official successor of Khomeini, he took the last step to abolish the prerequisite of *‘ālamīyyat* from the leadership of the jurist. It was a major shift from his previous standpoint that acknowledges jurisprudence as “the true and complete guideline for man and society from cradle to the grave” (Samaei SahnehSaraei et al. 2016, p. 110). Nowadays, the new generation of Khomeinist clergies promotes this idea by constructing its root to the classical juristic tradition in order to fabricate precedence for the last ideas of Khomeini, which prioritize the political prominence over the juristic specialty.

Ijtihad and fiqhahat are but one characteristic that a leader of the Islamic society should have. There is no reason to concentrate on the priority of ‘a’lem’ and thereby ignore other qualifications that walis (fuqaha) must possess, which might provide them with the necessary abilities and characteristics of a ruler ... as the author of *Jawaher al-Kalam* indicated, the traditional proofs of wilayat al-faqih are silent about *alamiya* as a condition of wilayat. (Vaezi 2004, p. 129)

In the early years of his reign, Khomeini subordinated already the juristic pluralism of Shia to pragmatically justify the superiority of one *faqih* over the others. The tie of his pragmatism with his political theology is clarified before. Nevertheless, the relationship of Khomeini as the holder of *velayat-e amr* with the old positions of *marja-e taqlid*, which is represented by Grand Ayatollahs remained theoretically disputable (Amir Arjomand 1988, pp. 180, 181). As a new shift in the Shiite tradition after the death of Khomeini, the current supreme leader compensated his fragile juristic nobility by subordinating all the Grand Ayatollahs. Ali Khamenei made *marjaiyyat* as a section of the governmental administration under the Islamic Republic. The post-marjaiyyat era has nullified the remained independence of the clerical establishment and has formed it as part of the state office. In the same way, Shiite theology has been transformed into the political theology in which divinity serves totalitarianism.

Constitutionalism, Religion & Modernization

3

It is necessary to clarify the descriptive word “modern,” which is attributed to the Iranian political system. The same explanation applies to “modernity” as a noun and a formed topic in humanities, which can be a historical era or a particular concept, depending on the field. However, the first impression of modernity is an idea or an approach that is a contemporary heritage from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment era. Similarly, modernization refers to the sort of policies that apply socio-cultural modern values to a specific country. The reason for mentioned clarification is a prevailing account in the literature on Iran’s contemporary political history to describe the Pahlavi monarchy and the Islamic Republic both as “modern political systems,” because only the instrumental reason and the will of using the technique are the meaning of “modern” in the mentioned literature.¹ Afary (2009) asserts that “it would be a mistake to call the Islamist social order counter-modern. Both the Pahlavi regime and the Islamist regime employed various techniques of modernity” (p. 267). This usage of “modern” in the Iranian political debates is an inheritance from the criticism of modernity, and the Enlightenment era, by some tremendous number of Marxist and neo-Marxist thinkers. The neglected fact in this perspective is to reduce modernity into its technical dimension and leave the liberal values unmentioned. The omission of the social welfare, prosperity, development in economic and public education, the

¹ In this sense, the naked brutality of radical Sunnism like ISIS is also a kind of “modern” system. For, they also had a great eagerness to use weapons, techniques and they want to earn revenue from oil industries and if it was possible, they made or used the atomic bomb. In the same way, a similar analysis applies to the regime in Pyongyang. Tehran after 1979 has no major difference in this regard.

peaceful relationships with the world and ultimately the constructive and cooperative regional role of Pahlavi monarchy is the same approach of all the analyses insisting on attributing “modern” to both pre-Islamic revolutionary systems and the one took place in Iran by the anti-Shah coalition. Similarly, they attribute “discriminative” to both regimes by appealing to the ideal and peculiarly to the abstract meaning of “discrimination”; without any attention to the political facts, the rights of religious minorities, the apparent difference of social justice and social liberty in two eras.

The emphasis on the autocratic characteristic in Pahlavi is usually aimed to undermine the way of ruling from 1925 until 1979, which was a true representative of the Constitutional Revolution in its modernization. However, the departure from constitutional politics made all the judiciary, educational, and economic development of Iran as findings of the Pahlavi despotism. In this regard, it seems like a fragile prejudgment to defend an autocratic modernization, though the central reflection of the thesis is to understand and represent the “political necessity” behind the mentioned despotism. By overriding the political reality, the anti-Shah ideology introduces the entire Pahlavi modernization to a despotic plan. The rest is easy to connect the Pahlavi pro-Western policy to the ideological category of “comprador bourgeoisie.” Nevertheless, the fundamental difference between the Pahlavi monarchy and the Islamic Republic makes it an inconsistent approach to attribute “modern” and “discriminative” to both systems by picturing the history in a simplistic frame.

Regardless of the particular discussion within the field of Iranian studies, the “modern” has an obscure and floating conceptual border by attributing to all contemporary systems based on fascism, communism, and Islamic ideology. When all of the mentioned regimes are “modern,” thereupon the question rises on the determined definition of “modern.” Any generalization of a conceptual limitation should be cautious about the danger that the meaning of a specific term loses its own notion by being attributed to contradictory examples. The will of all totalitarian systems to be equipped with techniques and the newest military facilities makes them modern in the sense of instrumental reason. The “modern” in the current text is meant adhering to the values of the Enlightenment era and the liberal demands in the 18th century which include even the conservative philosophy of Edmund Burke as the most considerable European thoughts to confront the French idea of liberty. Nevertheless, emphasizing the progressive feature of Pahlavi and the regressive feature of the Islamic Republic does not mean that the Ancien Régime was a democracy. In other words, the exclusive attribution of “modern” to the Pahlavi era does not intend to picture it as a loyal system to the comprehensive perception of “modernity” or to deny the vital defects of Pahlavi autocracy.

3.1 Politics and Religion in the Late Qajar Dynasty (1905–1925)

The last episode of the long Qajar dynasty is the start of the Iranian awakening from the then miserable level and is also the early period of the long, overwhelming engagement with the West till now. The theoretical concentration of this section is on the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 till transferring of the monarchy to Pahlavi in 1925. The role of Sharia law was at the center of controversial conversations between politicians, intellectuals, and certainly clerics. There was no consensus of their opinions about the kind of beneficial relationship between politics and religion, and consequently, it could not achieve a general agreement to put an end to the clerical dominance in the political realm.

Although the difficulties facing Islamic law in the conflict between the traditional and modern thought had become visible earlier, it was during the constitutional revolution that the issue came to the fore on a public level. ... The intellectual supremacy of the traditional *ʿulamā* became hence increasingly questioned as modern notions of constitutionalism, democracy and science were familiarised. ... While the religious constitutionalists shared certain distinctively modern concerns, the secular reformers, such as Fath *ʿAlī Akhūndzādah*, *ʿAbd al-Rahīm Ṭālibūf* and *Mirzā Āqā Khān Kirmānī*, ruled out any reconciliation between Islamic law and the modern state. (Dahlén 2004, p. 111)

When the discussion is about the relation of religion with politics in a Muslim country², except the importance of political and religious history, the legal circumstances or the judicial history is also an inseparable part of the inquiry. In

² It is needed to be analyzed, whether naming a whole land as the “Islamic country” is an acknowledgment of Islamism or not. It seems that using “Islamic” as an exclusive adjective for a country is part of the successful propaganda of Islamists to justify their demands of applying Sharia law and discriminating against a whole nation. “Muslim country” is less ideological because a Muslim can and should be against Islamic law in order to save his own life, the life of his family and friends, and at the end the life of a whole people who live there. Therefore, there is a justifiable possibility for a Muslim country not to run based on the Islamic law, but there is no chance for a country to get rid of the Sharia when it is being called constantly in the Western media and conferences as an “Islamic country.” The passive multiculturalism which is spread under the name of liberalism helps a lot the mentioned Islamic and discriminative demand. Sometimes, it is worth mentioning some simple truths. For example, *the discriminative law of compulsory Islamic veil* is not part of any culture as a value or as a tradition and cannot be justified under the political culture consequently. Similarly, there is no place in our contemporary era to justify slavery under the name of multiculturalism and it has gained the global consensus. However, Islamic law has a chance to justify itself as a supposed coalition against capitalism or imperialism. In this regard, passive Western liberalism needs to rethink its own values and assessments.

particular, the judiciary system has special importance when the study focuses on Islam and political power. For, applying Sharia law or demanding that Islamic law becomes the official law of a country is always the first vital step of all Islamists to seize the social and then governmental power. Relevantly, Islam is more a religion of law than a religion of spiritual teachings. The Sharia had been at the center of the Islamic worldview since early Islamic history and the emergence of this religion. The criticism on the general paradigm in the Iranian studies with the main focus on the modernization plan and neglecting the practical vitality and the theoretical importance of the Islamic judicial system in the 19th century. Studying the history of modernization in Iran cannot be detached from observing the history of Islamic law and its changes in the late Qajar dynasty and the entire Pahlavi era. In other words, there is no real reform in the body politic without a judicial one in order to apply modern laws instead of Islamic Sharia. The mentioned academic critique about the little attention on Qajar period or representing the whole era as a failed try to constitute a government, also reminds us that the supposed failed state in the Qajar era or the newly and slowly introduced Western parliamentary values does not necessarily mean that the Qajar structure had no law or no judicial procedure.

From a Muslim perspective, Islamic law can never be outdated because it is God's law. Naturally, most Muslim countries today claim that their law is based on Islamic law, or shari'a, even though their actual policies vary. Even the Iranian Civil Code established in 1928–1936 under the secular Pahlavi regime used Shi'i *fiqh* books as primary sources. Thus, even if one stands by the modernist position, it is difficult to understand these modernist discourses in their proper context without an adequate knowledge of the legal and judicial system. ... The Iranian government had already begun judicial reform in the nineteenth century, and the reform raised the same question that persists today about the relationship of modern institutions with shari'a. (Kondo 2017, pp. 1, 2)

Before the occurrence of the Revolution in 1905, there was a similar constitutional figure to Ahmad Kasravi in that period. Mirzā Aqā Khān Kermāni (1854–1896) was a Babi reformer and son-in-law of Şobḥ-e Azal. In his writings, Kermāni advocates for comprehensive reform characteristics of his generation of intellectuals that later set the stage for the Constitutional Revolution. The resemblance of Mirzā Aqā Khān Kermāni with Ahmad Kasravi can be summarized in “the glorification of ancient Iran and its religion, the hatred of the Arabs and their identification with Islam and of both with Iran's downfall, and ... the strong hostility to the clergy are all notes struck ... with increasing frequency” (Keddie 1962, p. 287).

As a historical incident to assess the loose basis of Shiite quietism and its capability to shift in a suitable opportunity, it is vital to mention the Tobacco Protest almost 15 years before the Constitutional Revolution. The Tobacco Protest was an ostensible Shiite revolt against the 1890 tobacco concession granted by Nasir al-Din Shah of Persia to Great Britain; it gave Britain considerable control over the growth, sale, and export of tobacco. Tehran merchants held the protest in solidarity with the Shiite *ulama*. The protest culminated in unprecedented obedience to December 1891 fatwa against the usage of tobacco issued supposedly by Grand Ayatollah Mirza Hassan Shirazi (1814–1895). The *fatwa* read: “In the name of God, the Merciful and the Forgiving. As of now, the consumption of tobacco in any form is tantamount to war against the Imam of the Age” (Moaddel 1994, p. 15). Moaddel gives an illuminative narration of the incident. According to him, the British embassy stepped back from the tobacco monopoly, because they began to realize that it “was not going to work, and its forced imposition did not seem to be in Britain’s best interest in Iran” (p. 15).

Moreover, the Russians became also active against the concession. The *fatwa* was quickly distributed throughout the country, and the tobacco movement became a nationwide tobacco boycott. However, the important historical fact is that the alleged *fatwa* was not real; a group of merchants fabricated it with the cooperation of a junior clergy. “When news of the boycott reached Shirazi, he was prudent enough not to deny its authenticity” (Moaddel 1994, p. 15). It demonstrates the historical interaction between class interests and religious discontent. The nationwide boycott ultimately forced the Shah to repudiate the concession by the end of January 1892. Moaddel illustrates the instrumentalist function of Shiite quietism by their turning discourse from keeping distance with politics into involving in public affairs both based on the similar religious argumentation; the interests of Muslims and the Islamic expediency.

What is important to realize is that the *fatwa* itself was the product of the social dialectics of the protest movement, and not a manifestation of the political theory of early Shi’ism or the *ulama*’s leading role as defenders of the national interest. ... In this process, the connection between material interests and the forged *fatwa* was later overlooked ... Also overlooked was the fact that a significant portion of the *ulama* failed to participate in the movement. In its stead, the idea that the Shi’i *ulama* were fundamentally against the state and tyranny was decontextualized from the very material conditions that caused its growth. Pro-*ulama* propagandists then began perpetuating the myth that the *ulama* had saved Iran’s resources from being plundered by imperialism. (Moaddel 1994, p. 16)

Undeniably, the Qajar dynasty was unable and unwilling to be reformed, and for the very same reason, the Constitutional Revolution took place in the time of an ill and old monarch, who could not suppress the excessive demands of justice, liberty, and prosperity in Iranian elite and new negation of modernist intellectuals. In other words, the Constitutional Revolution owed its victory partly to the weak central authority and administrative power in the time of Moẓaffar-al-dīn Shah (1896–1907). It is important to know that the primitive motivation of the Constitutional Revolution was economical, and the vigorous revolt did not start by demanding the very constitutionalism. By a governmental decision in Tehran, the price of sugar became lower, and it smashed the financial balance of respected merchants. It was the first good cause to rebel against the Qajar despotism. By taking sanctuary two times respectively, merchants and *ulama* and theology students (*tullāb*), led by Sayyid Abdollāh Bihbahānī (1840–1910)³ and Sayyid Muhammad Tabātabā’ī (1842–1920),⁴ the Shah after one month of protests finally accepted the demand of dismissing the governor of Tehran, Alā al-Dawlah, and establishing a House of Justice (*Adālat Khānah*). The Shah dismissed the governor of Tehran, but he had no interest to establish an independent judicial structure. Even the ill Shah turned back from his promises and restored to the previous governmental resistance against constitutionalists (Varedi 1992, p. 21).

In general, the Qajars had no instruments to enforce their will, so even a local Mujtahid could cause a “popular uproar” and Qajars were always forced to retreat and pardon (Abrahamian 1974, p. 12). As an indication of the power of *ulama*, the next massive demonstrations could be realized mainly due to the ability to organize people against the Shah and it accomplished by *ulama* to bring their families and their theology students to the protests. Moreover, the merchants and other groups of people took sanctuary in the British legation and demanded to establish the National Assembly. Indeed, the role of merchants was not less than the role of Shiite clergies, but it should not forget that the main part of the Shiite clerical victory against Moẓaffar-al-dīn Shah rooted in the legal pressure of *ulama* on the government that all legal procedures were supposed to be suspended due to the lack of religious legitimacy. “It should be noted that during this period,

³ Sayyid Abdollāh Bihbahānī was a Shia theologian and a prominent leader of the 1905 revolution. During the constitutional movement, he acted as an active religious figure in the Majlis. On 15 July 1910, Bihbahānī was killed in his house by unknown attackers.

⁴ Sayyid Muhammad Tabātabā’ī was one of the leaders of the Constitutional Revolution who played an impressive role in the establishment of law in Iran.

all legal and judicial matters were handled by the Ulamā. In their absence, legal transactions such as marriage, divorce, and all other contracts were impossible” (Varedi 1992, pp. 22, 44). Similarly, when Shiite clergies became disappointed by their primitive imagination of “the constitutional,” they used the same authority to confront the intellectuals. According to Ali Mirsepassi, The dual role of *ulama* under Qajar was bestowed to them due to their mediatory position in the socio-political stratum of Qajar.

The Shi’i *‘ulama*, who enjoyed institutional and financial independence and religious prestige, became a powerful political mediator between the state (the king and the court) and the rest of society. For that reason, and because of their “neutral” position in the politics of the society, the Shi’i clerics were viewed by the Qajar rulers as the protectors of their kingship, while ordinary Iranians looked to them as political sources of power against the arbitrary rule and political oppression of the state. (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 65)

The “neutral” position in politics gave *ulama* advantages to expand their local authority. The renewed *sahm-i Imam* which senior-ranking *ulama* took from the people under the name of “the share of the occulted Imam in your income” and the direct engagement of some Shiite clergies in the economic market turned them from “humble teachers of the madrasas into significant financiers and investors” (A. Amanat 2009, p. 158). The most ignominious example of the expeditious opportunity for a shift in status within the hierarchical social levels among the new generation of mujtahids was Muhammad Baqir Shafi (1260–1844). Shafi, a prominent Shiite *mujtahid* and jurist under Qajars became a powerful economic and juristic figure in the 1820s and 1830s in Isfahan. The demand for clerical support between locals and the gap between the Isfahan government and the central authorities in Tehran provided a unique opportunity for Shafi to utilize the fragile balance of power in order to increase his advantages. However, Amanat reminds us that Shafi was not an exception amongst mujtahids at that time. The arbitrary and authoritative interpretation of the Shiite jurisprudence benefited *ulama* on many occasions. Under Qajars, all these achievements improved the authority of mujtahids in an unprecedented way.

The restoration of Safavid *waqfs* under Fath ‘Ali—the reverse of Nadir’s policy—brought a large portion of *raqabat-i Nadiri* under clerical control. Skillful justification for the repossession of unclaimed property (*ghasb-i bila-sahib*), as well as actual participation in trade and agriculture, gave them a substantial economic base. (A. Amanat 2009, p. 159)

In these circumstances, the issue of law and the meaning of legality and lawful position were at the center of debate between intellectuals during the constitutional changes in Iran. The first seeds of flourishing future Iranian middle class in the Pahlavi era, also known as the modern intelligentsia (*munaver al-fekr*) as a small scale of the middle class, had put in the problematic challenge between the Western progression and the reaction of Iranians in the Qajar era (Abrahamian 1979a).

Having won the attention of the shah, Malkum Khan drafted for the court a *Daftar-I Tanzimat* (Book of Reform). Obviously inspired by the contemporary Tanzimat movement in the Ottoman Empire, the *Daftar* was one of the first systematic proposals for reform written in nineteenth-century Iran. It began with a general warning that the country would soon be engulfed by the foreign powers unless the shah [*sic*] immediately decreed laws for reform. Malkum Khan used the term *qanun* for these laws, to differentiate them from both the religious canons (*sharia*) and the old state regulations (*urf*). (Abrahamian 1982, p. 66)

The difference between “the religious canons” and “the old state regulations” is one of the most controversial themes in Iranian judicial history and the Shiite jurisprudence. In general and as the least outcomes of all debates related to clarifying the mentioned difference, it should be said that the modern law is based on the natural law and the very differentiation of religious canon and state regulations is based on Sharia law. In other words, Shiite jurisprudence allegedly derives from the main Islamic sources that Allah approved some previous regulations before Islam emerged, and when these regulations have no conflict with religious canons. Therefore, the social customs, which have regulated everyday life before the Sharia, have no authentic standpoint in the religious perspective and the very Sharia approval of non-Sharia regulations is conditional. It means, in conflictions between non-religious traditions and Sharia laws, the priority belongs to the Sharia. With all these considerations, the very differentiation of *Sharia* and *urf* is far from the humanistic basis of modern laws, which gives human beings principal rights only because of the authenticity of human existence. Therefore, the emphasis on the distinction between social regulations and religious canons could not be a fundamental approach to solve the problem of Shiite establishment in Iran. However, it was a first and considerable step to start the separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial authority from the Sharia law and clerical interference in the then body politic. The conflicts with clerical status was a simultaneous event with the revision of Islamic believes. For example, the ancient Abrahamic debate about the relation of religion with human knowledge came to the public as a polemic issue between constitutionalists. Tavakoli Targhi (2015)

explains the theoretical confusions to formulate a logical relationship between faith and science at that time. The precedence of the challenge comes back to ancient Greek. In the Muslim world, Averroes (1126–1198)⁵ reformulates the method of reconciling Revelation and truth. He did not claim that philosophy and theology belong to a different plane of reality. However, Averroes expressed that “although Revelation very clearly declares that God created the world, it does not say how or when, and so it is by philosophy (only) that one can explain whether the universe was created a finite or infinite time ago” (Guessoum 2011, p. xviii). Taking all these considerations, then Averroes started to argue for the eternity of the world. Unlike the Islamic form of double faith theory that makes a distinction between the trueness of faith, the ability to bring three various forms of arguments, i.e., dialectical, rhetorical, and demonstrative (Wolfson 1942), and the different planes of accessibility to the truth, some constitutionalists illustrate the antagonist relation between faith and reality.

Linked to everyday questions of illness and death, the critiquing of such Islamic purity ordinances led to the larger debate over the incompatibility of science and religion. Fatali Akhundzadeh, for instance, explained that “science and faith” (*‘ilm va i’tiqad*) are irreconcilable: ‘To distinguish truth from falsehood and right from wrong, our fault until now has been that we have always mingled the two opposing entities and have considered them as one, while the two are (in fact) conflicting. One is science, and the other is faith’. (Tavakoli-Targhi 2015, p. IX)

The confrontation between the Shiite clerical establishment and the constitutionalists passed various phases, and there was no united attitude to deal with Shiite clergies between the Iranian constitutionalists; some of them were mostly prudent, and the others were mostly radical. Mirza Yusuf Khan Mustashar al-Dawlah (1813–1895), the Iranian diplomat and the liberal thinker, is considered among the cautious constitutionalists. He summarized the whole European progression under a “single word”: law. The major of his thoughts are gathered in a book with the same title to insist on the importance of law. Mustashar al-Dawlah perceived the entire European prosperity on the basis of justice, and that is why he pursued to form a new judiciary system. The conflicts between the new and the old emerged in the public debate, and the place of Sharia law became a critical shift, which they had to choose a way of dealing with its official representatives as *ulama*. The wondering of the Western civilization was not enough and could

⁵ Ibn Rushd was a Muslim Andalusian philosopher. His philosophical works include numerous commentaries on Aristotle, for which he was known in the West as *The Commentator*. Averroes served as a judge under the Almohad caliphate (1121–1269).

not suggest a local solution while confusing Christianity with Islam had already paved the way for misunderstanding.

To legitimize these legislative houses and representatives of the nation he cited the two celebrated passages from the Qur'an and prophetic traditions (hadith) that recommended consultation. These were invoked as proof that early Islam had a representative, indeed a parliamentary, tradition and supported the revival of these abandoned institutions ... [He] boldly asserted that the French and other civilized nations' law codes were in conformity with Islamic law, and that all sound European laws (which were the reason for the European nations' great progress), had been declared by the Prophet for the nation of Islam twelve hundred and eighty years earlier. (Sohrabi 2011, pp. 302, 303)

Therefore, although Mustashar al-Dawlah accepts fundamental differences between French law and Islamic law, he tries to conciliate the latter with the first by claiming that Islam conforms to human progression. Supposing general answers to the particular questions led to the negligence of modern philosophy, which is the basis of the industrial revolution and the emergence of the new ruling way in the West (Sohrabi 2011). On the contrary, Hasan Taqizadeh (1878–1970)⁶ was among those pro-Western constitutionalists who emphasized learning from the Western worldview as the most influential source of inspiration during the Constitutional movement. He believed that except the Persian language, Iran should thoroughly follow Western patterns to achieve both progression and independence. He wrote in the diaspora-newspaper *Kaveh*⁷ that “Iran must become wholly Western in every way if it were to progress; this is perhaps the high point of the Westernist view of nationalism, which Taqizadeh himself later modified” (Keddie and Richard 2006, pp. 80, 181) The question of “should we emulate the West?” is still the most problematic theme that shapes the Iranian politics and even the Islamic Republic measures itself always by the comparison with

⁶ Hasan Taqizadeh was an influential Iranian politician and diplomat during the Qajar dynasty under the reign of Mohammad Ali Shah, as well as the Pahlavi monarchy under the reign of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah. He spent 14 years in exile from October 1910 till July 1924. In the history of the Constitutional Revolution, Taqizadeh is well known as a secular intellectual, who emphasized assertively the necessity to acknowledge and apply Western values.

⁷ *Kaveh*, as a Persian periodical, was founded in 1916 by the Intelligence Agency for the Orient (Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient—NfdO) of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. The duration of publishing *Kaveh* was between 1916 and 1922 by Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh (1878–1970), and Sayyid Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh (1892–1997). The title refers to a legendary blacksmith who is believed to be a savior of ancient Iran in mythical history.

the West, though with an anti-Western approach. The other group of constitutionalists was more explicit about opposing the clerical barrier in front of their constitutionalist demands. Akhundzādeh (1972) publicly criticized the lack of a critical approach in Islamic publications. “Mustashar al-Dawlah’s tract has been the subject of much discussion by contemporaries and later scholars. His friend Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadah from Tiflis rejected his Islamic constitutionalism and what he had hoped would clear the way for rapid progress” (Sohrabi 2011, p. 304).

Similarly, Malkum Khan along with establishing “a reform-seeking secret society based on the model of European Masonic lodges” in 1858, promoted the idea of *the religion of humanity* to advocate social and individual rights (Sohrabi 2011, p. 299). Expectedly, the main concern in the letters between constitutionalists was the everlasting decline and decay in the then despotic reign of Qajar and the main hope was to rebuild the country along with an extensive social awakening (Afshar 2007, p. 161). Despite all the various intellectual efforts, the Islamic mentality remained unintegrated with the Iranian constitutionalism, and the latter also turned into a progressive autocracy in 1925, which ended up with a regressive theocracy in 1979. The attribution of regressiveness to the Islamic Revolution and consequently to the Islamic Republic as the political embodiment of the revolution does not mean that the current thesis confined itself under the prevailing category of “the historical tensions between tradition and modernity.” Similarly, it does not mean that the thesis interprets the revolution as a simple “return to Islam” by ignoring “Many other forces were involved in generating an atmosphere in which Islamic discourse would prevail” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 51). The failure of the Constitutional Revolution, the failure of the Pahlavi Modernization, and the victory of the Islamic Revolution all can be analyzed under the “challenge of modernity in Iran.” However, the different perspectives to assess the aspects of the challenge are inevitable. Similarly, there was also no public consensus between all the constitutionalists even about the necessity of the constitutional monarchy. For example, Malkum Khan became more pessimistic about the function of any constitutional systems in Iran. That is also an explanation of the pretexts of the considerable support which the autocratic reform plan of Reza Shah received from intellectuals and former constitutionalists. “Malkum was explicit about his lack of desire for constitutional systems where ‘legislation was the duty of the nation and enforcement that of the monarch’; he believed that the autocratic, yet legalistic governments of Russia and Austria were better models for Iran to follow” (Sohrabi 2011, pp. 300, 301).

The same debate and lack of consensus were taking place between Shiite clerics on the truest standpoint about the constitutional demands. In general, the role

of *ulama* in the late Qajar dynasty has obvious importance due to its influence on the Islamic Revolution (Malek-Ahmadi 2015). Since 1979, the impact of the Constitutional Revolution reproduces the constant fear in the Shiite hierocracy, which has warned about their loss during 1905–11. The clerical feeling of being in danger and the clerical sense of loss concerning the Constitutional Revolution are symbolized in the execution of Shaikh Fazlullah Nouri (1843–1909). Shaikh Fazlullah was the prominent Shia cleric who soon turned against the constitutional demands due to his anti-Western attitude and his Islamic expectations from the political changes which he had seen as a way to empower the clerical authority. Nouri believed that an elected parliament is a threat to Islam. He attacked the foundation of constitutionalism based on the superiority of Sharia and the incompatibility of freedom and equality with Islamic principles includes the subjugation to Allah. Shaikh Fazlullah attributed “Naṣārā” to Malkam Khan aimed to accuse him of blasphemy by converting himself to Christianity (Nouri 1983). He became an ideal model of clerical interference into politics after 1979 and being commemorated under the religious title of “martyr” decades before the Islamic Revolution by the famous anti-Pahlavi and anti-Western intellectual Jalal Al-e-Ahmad (1923–1969). He tragically described his execution and symbolized it as “the defeat of Islamic Iran by being subordinate to the West” (Al-e Ahmad 1979, p. 402).

On another side, there were constitutionalist clergies like Mirza Mohammad Hussein Na’ini who tried to propose an unprecedented theological interpretation from Islamic sources in order to reconcile religion and constitutionalism. In this regard, Mustashar al-Dawlah and Na’ini both were standing in the same position and each of them in their part pursued the peace between the institutionalized Shiism and the newly-born constitutionalism. The neglected fact about their approach is that there is no peace without a war, and there is no integrated Islam without criticizing it accurately. Therefore, both sides of constitutionalists, whether radical or prudent, did a mutual complementary historical task. The least evidence of the powerful position of religious mentality during the Constitutional Revolution was the very incident that the anti-constitutionalist cleric Nouri sentenced to death based on a religious order, Islamic *fatwa*, uttered by another cleric Shaikh Ebrahim Zanjāni (1855–1934) who is considered a pro-Constitutionalist cleric. Moreover, Zanjāni was a member of the Masonic lodge Bīdārī-e Iran, Awakening of Persia, which was the same that Mohammad Ali Foroughi had joined before. Ironically, the political reason behind the execution of Shaikh Fazlullah Nouri was exactly the fear of a soon-issued *fatwa* from Nouri as an Islamic commitment to confront the constitutionalism, the Islamic *Jahād*, and the probability of facing a supposed religious rebellion against constitutionalists.

The theological theory of Na'ini to justify the Iranian constitutionalism can be considered as the second try after what Nader Shah (1688–1747) had coined unsuccessfully. As part of Nader's reform plan, the then Shah as a founder of a new monarchic succession tried to change the entire religious establishment made by Safavid and became one of the most extensive plans of converting the Iranians from Sunni *madhhab* to Shiite one. Even though the religious and political aspects of Nader's reign cannot be examined thoroughly in detail due to the problem of source limitations, but it is at least clear that the failure of Nader's reforms left a gap between the political authority and the religious authority. Although there is a fundamental difference between the two mentioned endeavors (E. S. Tucker 2006). Ādamīyat (1920–2008), a former diplomat and a prominent social historian of contemporary Iran, analyzed the importance of Na'ini works under the concept of “juristic justification of the constitutional politics.” Ādamīyat (1984) believed that the theoretical position of Na'ini in his theological treatises is still the most impressive religious interpretation of the concept of “constitutionalism” and the notable effort to justify the Revolution of 1905 based on the Islamic law. Na'ini attacked those who want to preserve *Shajareh-ie Khabiseh-ie Estebdād* (the satanic pedigree of despotism) in the name of God and religion in order to omit freedom and equality which both are the foundations of the rights of people and the responsibility of government about it. To justify freedom and equality, as a constitutionalist Shiite clergy, Na'ini constantly refers to Islam and *Sunna* (Na'ini 2014, pp. 95–98).

It is worth mentioning that the first wave of Iranian anti-clericalism as a social and intellectual activity took place during the Constitutional Revolution. Opposing the Shiite clerical authority was the prerequisite to any religious reforms, for as far as a strong clerical establishment remains untouched, there is no chance to run a reform plan on the religious realm. The clerical privileges had an undeniable influence on political and social affairs. The constitutionalist mentality in 1905 perceived the mentioned fact immediately, and subsequently, some of the intellectuals started anti-clerical rhetoric or even a sarcastic newspaper to mock Mullahs as a radical way of criticism in order to oppose an old and institutionalized barrier against constitutionalism. As a historical example, *Molla Nasr Al-din*⁸ was an Azerbaijani satirical periodical⁹ was founded by Jalil Mamed Qolizadeh

⁸ As Paksoy (2010) illustrates, Molla Nasr Al-din is a legendary Sufi man-cum-fool of the middle ages and can also be considered a “populist philosopher, wit and wise man.”

⁹ The periodical inspired its name and materials from “the most widely known protagonist of humorous prose narrative in the Near East.” Its fictitious, character, stories, and worldviews are not necessarily “adjusted in accordance with changing standards” of our “contemporary frame of interpreting” such materials (Marzolph 1995, p. 172).

(1862–1932), a celebrated Azerbaijani playwright, and published in Tiflis (from 1906–17) and other cities during the next years.

The journal advocated companionate marriage and criticized sexual relationships with minor children, including the institution of child marriage. It also suggested a link between men's intransigence toward gender reforms and their reluctance to abandon sex-segregated homosocial spaces. Notably, *Molla Nasreddin* became the first publication in the Shi'i Muslim world to endorse normative heterosexuality ... *Molla Nasreddin* advocated a progressive reading of Islamic texts and was the first newspaper in Iran and Central Eurasia to reinterpret Qur'anic verses in light of modern gender concerns. (Afary 2009, p. 135)

The early goal of the periodical was to oppose the Muslim scholars or clergies and their hypocrite role in society by using a sarcastic sense of humor and realist illustrations. *Molla Nasr Al-din* lately criticized the colonial policy, elite's corruption, and misogynic laws in the same manner.¹⁰ The birth of such a periodical was by the reflections of constitutionalists like Mirzā Fatali Akhundzādeh (1972) and his emphasis on the vitality of satire to confront perpetual superstitions which shape dogmas and bigotries (p. 21). The editorial team faced many harassments, threats, and attacks due to the magazine's anti-clerical content. Hasan Taqizadeh describes the severity of political oppression in the *Estebdād-e Saqīr* (The short despotism) during 1908–9 by mentioning that the government banned people from being gathered and newspapers include *Molla Nasr Al-din* were being shut down (Afshar 1980, p. 78).

Eventually, the late Qajar period is also significant regarding be the eve of Iranian women struggle with the clerical authority and misogynic Sharia law. As an iconic figure, Sediqeh Dowlatābādi (1882–1961) was one of the first Iranian women who fought against Islamic discrimination and claimed equal rights. She was the founder of the first magazine, *Zabān-e Zanān* (The Women's Voice) in 1919, which was exclusively dedicated to women's issues. Expectedly, the local Shiite clergies opposed her journalistic career. The magazine not only dealt with the themes to awake women and made them aware of their rights, but also discussed the political issues like its objection against The Anglo-Persian Oil Agreement of 1919, which ended up with the governmental decision to close the magazine. After receiving her B.A. from the Sorbonne University in the field of educational science, she represented the modern image of Iranian Women in the

¹⁰ Nevertheless, as Afary (2009) reminds us, the magazine "initiated a wide criticism of homosexuality" (p. 3).

International Alliance for Women's Suffrage in 1926 (Dowlatabādi 1998, pp. 5–7). She refused to wear the Islamic veil in 1927 and pursued her cultural activities targeting discrimination against women in Iran.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the situation of social liberties includes women's rights in the time between the Constitutional Revolution and the rise of the Pahlavi Monarchy was still traditional and under the pressure of Sharia, regardless of some individual struggle as in the case of Sediqeh Dowlatabādi. Concerning Qajar domestic attitude, there was no support for her or other similar activities in the governmental plane. Even Mohammad Ali Foroughi (2015) in his detailed and accurate political memoirs during the Paris Peace Conference had not courageousness to express his own opinions by observing the Turkish women in the streets of Istanbul, who left mere an extreme part of the Islamic veil, namely *burqa*. Instead, he preferred only to describe the scene, on January 1919, by articulating that “The Muslim women in Istanbul stopped to wear the Islamic veil and they are walking on the streets like men and with open, recognizable and unveiled faces, but their hair is still covered” (pp. 26, 27). Moreover, he went to a theatre in Paris¹¹ in the same month and described it in a combined way of enjoyment and discontent; he liked the plays on the scene, except that those actors who wore Oriental clothes had partly subverted the true Oriental way of clothing and had too much-unveiled behavior (*bi-hejabi*) on the scene (M. A. Foroughi 2015, p. 38). By the latter part, Foroughi means that the plays were far from the Islamic or the then traditional Persian dress code in the late Qajar. Cumulatively, his neutral narration of what was happening in Istanbul and his mild objection to a supposed half-naked play in the theatre in Paris, are both pieces of evidence of the conservative Islamic policy of Qajar dynasty in the sphere of the social liberty. Even Foroughi, as a member of the Persian delegation during his journey to the Paris Peace Conference, had no imagination of the progression in women's rights and freedom in the future of Iran. That is why he described the removal of the *burqa* as leaving *hijab*. Regardless of the prudent and cautious personality of Foroughi, in this case, it is acknowledgeable that a radical decision in politics, like the law of 1936 under the reign of Reza Shah, can change the atmosphere for both the government and the people in an unpredictable way.

Unlike some of the current Iranian feminists who neglect the historical necessity of the law of 1936 and usually label it as a “secular oppression” and make it equal to the “religious oppression” after 1979 (K. C. Hashemi 2018), Dowlatabādi

¹¹ According to his memoirs, Foroughi was in the Théâtre-Français to see one of plays of the French writer Erckmann-Chatrian, or Émile Erckmann (1822–1899), named *L'Ami Fritz*.

was a supporter of the social reforms under Reza Shah included the mentioned law, lately named as Women's Emancipation Day. In an official letter¹² to the then prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq, she criticizes the decision of Mosaddeq cabinet to reform the electoral law which wanted to indicate the deprivation of women to vote. She asserted that the reform plan is shameful, is against the Constitutional Revolution, and is against the vocal promise of the Shah that women will gain their right to vote. Dowlatābādi (1998) reminds Mosaddeq that "the women are also part of the Iranian nation, and they should receive the benefits of citizenship" (p. 166).

3.2 Instrumentalist Approach of Pahlavi Toward Religion

Pahlavi monarchy is the most controversial period of contemporary Iranian history, even more than the successor, i.e., the Islamic Republic. The whole period which lasted more than a half-century is full of pride and honor for right nationalists and full of humility and shame for anti-imperialists. In the time between 1953 till 1979, the anti-imperialist spectrum was consisting of the far-right religious groups to the far-left secular oppositions. The most neglected fact is that a nationalist or patriotist is not necessarily an anti-imperialist. For example, the very Shah was a patriot without an anti-imperialist attitude. Anti-imperialism includes a clear sense of hatred against foreign forces and has an old xenophobic sensation. Even during the Constitutional Revolution, the ambivalent Iranian xenophobia is recognizable. Besides the zealous fascination of Iranian constitutionalists to refer their *Mashruteh* to Western politics and peculiarly the British parliamentarism, "the intimate political ties" between Qajar rulers and the British aroused the eve of skeptical approach toward the West between intellectuals (Mirsepassi 2017, p. 43). Indeed, Super Powers by ensuring their own interests in Iran occasionally played a "detrimental" role to the domestic interests of the country. However, foreign meddling cannot justify the righteousness of conspiracy theories and xenophobic feelings, as the weakness of the nation-state is not an excuse in international politics (Olson 2013). The love-hate sensation about modernity derived from the early skepticism in 1905 which mutated to an incoherent ideological coalition based on the anti-Western ideology woven with the nativist resentment

¹² The original letter contained no date, but Mosaddeq was appointed as the prime minister on the 30th April 1951 and the next month he sent the mentioned reform plan to the National Parliament.

in the late decades of the Pahlavi monarchy. In this sense, the zealous enthusiasm to the West in 1905 ended up with “revenge, hatred, malice, envy, [and] the impulse to detract and spite” (Banning 2006, p. 74), as the characteristics of the *ressentiment* in 1979.

The study of the Pahlavi approach toward religion is vital, for eventually the downfall of the system was delivered by a political religion that became more politicized in the previous decades. Pahlavi’s patriotism was theoretically paradoxical, though it developed the country on an unprecedented scale. We learned that there is no accessible, comprehensive vision of the religion in the Middle East without assessing the demand for independence, which is woven with xenophobic nationalism. The very distinction between nationalism and transnationalism in the thoughts and deeds of the anti-Shah opposition is a non-existent entity, for their instrumental sense toward the homeland as a means of use in the global Islamic or communist struggle against imperialism and its allies. In this regard and strictly speaking, there was no such democratic patriotism in the contemporary history of Iran. The Tudeh (Communist) Party wanted to subordinate the Iranian state to The Soviet Union by devoted themselves to follow Soviet foreign policies unconditionally (Mirsepassi 2004), and by transforming from an almost “radical and progressive” party to a pro-Moscow and then to a “typical Stalinist party that existed only as a mouthpiece for Soviet politics in Iran” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 54). The Islamists sought the interest of the international Muslim community instead of Iranians as a nation. Both of mentioned political attitudes had the same anti-imperialistic gesture with real dependence on many foreign powers in the region or beyond it. The majority of leftist groups had an apparent dependency on the Eastern bloc during the cold war. The Islamists like Ayatollah Khomeini had secret contact with the American administration from John F. Kennedy (Fattahi 2016a) till Jimmy Carter (Fattahi 2015). The National Front had a reputation of patriotism, but they invested more in the populist, xenophobic sense in the Iranian society and they, themselves, have both tendencies toward anti-imperialism and Islamism. They proved the alleged tendency during the Islamic revolution to support Khomeini. With all these considerations, it seems that the only patriotic force as a crucial actor in the political scene was the Pahlavi state, which was not and likely could not be democratic in that time. The Shah explained his patriotic policy in an interview in the 1970s. “In Building a strong society on those [materialistic and spiritualistic] basis, first of all, we are trying to serve our own country first, then our region, then eventually be a good partner for the rest of the world” (thekinolibrary 2017a). Therefore, the autocratic patriotism ruled the country in the last overthrown monarchy.

The Tudeh Party of Iran (1941–1988) was the most influential Communist party. It played the main role during Mohammad Mosaddeq’s campaign to allegedly nationalize the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. After dismissing Mosaddeq in 1953, the Tudeh Party being suppressed in a wide range, although the followers continued their activities. The party, after assisting Khomeini to establish his tyranny, passed the Islamic trial in 1982 followed by mass arrests and selectively executions of its leaders by the Islamic Republic. The Tudeh Party had a considerable influence in its early decade on both the social and political atmosphere of Iran. “The ‘radical modernists,’ mostly embodied by the Tudeh Party, dominated the intellectual community. This intellectual strand extended far beyond politics, as its intellectuals transformed the Iranian cultural space across multiple fields: theater, literary criticism, poetry, cinema, and fiction writing” (Mirsepassi 2017, p. 43). Although Joudaki (2012) criticizes the mentioned assumption and gives historical evidences that the “intellectual influence of the Tudeh” is mostly part of its own propaganda as an arbitrary selective approach to many different facts. Joudaki illustrates that many prominent figures are being considered as “the cultural achievements of the Tudeh” just because of their sympathies for a while or because one of their articles were being published in a volume of the Tudeh magazine. Khalil Maleki (1901–1969), the socialist political activist, intellectual, and a member of Taqi Arani’s circle¹³ (known as the Group of 53) indicates in his memoirs that the Tudeh Party be acknowledging the Soviet Union as its own patron, disappointed many talented young generations who attended the party to actualize the hope of developing the homeland (K. Maleki 1989, p. 322).

As an example of the patriot sentiments of Ahmad Kasravi as a radical religious reformer who had peculiar political opinions, it is worth mentioning his practical judgment on the function of the Tudeh Party in Iran. His criticism on the supposed need to found a pro-Soviet party like Tudeh is a sign of Kasravi’s common sense in politics or “the philosophy of non-philosophers” (Hopf 2013, p. 322) which perceive, understand and judge the state of affairs with a genuine sense of reality and necessity. Therefore, Kasravi constructively criticizes

¹³ Taqi Arani, (1903–1940), was one of the first famous left-wing political activists in Iran. Arani founded the Marxist magazine *Donyā* and worked there as the main editor. He graduated from Dār al-fonūn (House of Sciences) in Tehran and pursued his studies in Germany in the field of Chemistry at Berlin Institute of Technology. Simultaneously, he started self-studying politics based on his own personal tendency. Arani returned to Iran in 1928. Many people consider *Donyā* as his most important contribution to modern intellectual life in Iran. In 1938, he and 52 of his colleagues, The Fifty-Three, were arrested and charged with being involved in communist activities. They were released like many other political prisoners after the abdication of Reza Shah. However, Arani died (allegedly was killed according to unproven claims) in jail in February 1940.

the very necessity to establish the Tudeh Party, which considers a foreign power as its patron. In other words, he argues that the Tudeh Party is at least an unnecessary political force or it has a destructive function in the domestic politics due to its reverse priorities, i.e., firstly considering the interests of the Soviet Union instead of Iran (Kasravi 1945, pp. 11, 12).

3.2.1 Reza Shah and Religion: the Rise of Pahlavi Monarchy

The history of Pahlavi's relation with Shia Islam began with the rise of the Reza Shah. The historical necessity of emerging a benevolent despot should be considered as an outcome of the failed Constitutional Revolution, not as a regressive force to stop Iranian constitutionalism (A. M. Ansari 2012). Iran in the late Qajar period was a glaring example of a failed state, and the country was suffering from many crucial problems due to its lack of development. In the Qajar era, religious minorities were living under the constant threat of clerics and mobs. "During the pre-Reza Shah era, the clergy exercised excessive power at local levels, and the non-Muslim communities were at the mercy of their whims" (Sanasarian 2000, p. 54). Reza Shah expressed his negative assessment of the Qajar dynasty in his memoirs before his kingship. He believed that the failure of ruling under Qajar delivers a country full of passiveness, corruption, selfishness, and lawlessness. Moreover, he had a real concern that without a strong army and by rising many separatist movements, Iran will be devastated soon (R. S. Pahlavi 1971, p. 38). "It was in this chaotic environment that Reza Khan made his entrance onto the Iranian political stage" (A. M. Ansari 2007, p. 30). As Homayoun (2006) indicates, the 1921 Persian coup d'état was inevitable (pp. 17, 18), and it faced with no resistance of the people of Tehran (A. M. Ansari 2012). In contrary to the allegation of anti-Pahlavi critics, the coup of 1921 was not a British plan, and the mentioned propaganda against Reza Shah neglects both domestic and international facts. "Not only does such an assessment ignore Iranian motives but it also neglects the fact that by 1921, policymakers in Britain were (yet again) losing interest in Iran" (A. M. Ansari 2012, pp. 71, 72).

There is a debate about whether Reza Shah's nationalistic movement can be categorized under Bonapartism. However, it seems that promoting mere an authoritative centralized state or advocating a robust charismatic leader, or asserting that a central authority can direct a socio-political transformation and can bring back the nationalist sense of glory and national unity, all does not make a given movement as a Bonapartist one. There is a wide range of the definition of Bonapartism. For example, Bonapartism is attributed to the rise of Bismarck

(1815–1898), a conservative Prussian statesman who charged of presenting “the anti-Catholic hysteria” (Steinberg 2011, p. 335), and of becoming a dictator after 1870, because Bonapartism was regarded by those who attached the label “as potentially revolutionary and anti-Christian” (Mitchell 1977, p. 182), and due to the fact that in 1871 “the majority Liberals allowed anti-Catholicism to trump their liberal principles” in Germany (Steinberg 2011, p. 316). According to Ansari (2013), the bureaucratic reform and the administrative conservatism of Reza Shah are more resemble the Russian conservatism under Peter the Great (1672–1725), than to the Prussian conservatism (Barclay 2004, pp. 68, 69, 76) under Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898). As Mehrzad Boroujerdi (2015) notes, the emergence of Reza Shah cannot be considered as an anti-elitist political movement or, i.e., Bonapartism. On the contrary, the rise of Reza Shah, which ended up with the new monarchic succession was based on an actual and rational assessment of the unfortunate situation of Iran. Ansari (2012) indicates that Reza Khan “was hailed by intellectuals and those of a progressive persuasion as the savior of the nation and the individual most likely to provide the secure political framework for the pursuit of reforms and the cultivation of a reinvigorated ‘nation-state’” (p. 66). Almost all constitutionalists and elites supported his political plan to change the way of ruling. Therefore, there was no deception, and he did not deceive Iranian elites.

Analyzing the rise of Pahlavi power within the framework of imposing the wrong idea of politics or a collective decision of Iranian nobles based on ignorance which led to a dictatorship, is itself negligence of the failed Iranian constitutionalism. As Homayoun (2009a) indicates, Reza Shah despite all negative propaganda against him, was not an antithesis of the Constitutional Revolution, he was the best result of the failed revolution of 1905, and he realized many of the demands of constitutionalists out of their imagination. Blaming Reza Shah for the failure of the Constitutional Revolution is irrelevant and ahistorical (pp. 118–120). In fact, the 1905 Revolution had lost both the demanded liberty and the political authority of the late Qajar era. The constitutionalists wanted to build a liberal democracy without its prerequisites like national security, public literacy, and public health. Mehrzad Boroujerdi asserted that observing the Revolution of 1905 as a historical possibility to bring democracy in Iran, is among romantic perspectives in politics, which prevents us from perceiving the paradoxical aspects of the Constitutional Revolution. As it is discussed in section 3.3, constituting a nation is impossible without an already constituted state, and the state-nation is primarily based on a state which is “possible” to be democratized by the adherence to liberal values in politics.

The role of religion and the necessity to choose an expedient attitude toward Shiism in Iran led Reza Shah to be cautious on the eve of his political plan. During his path to power, Reza Shah pursued a cautious and prudent domestic diplomacy to maintain his then position in order to strengthen his power in the late Qajar dynasty. There was no sign of a secular Reza Shah or his anti-clerical sensations. The main secular intention within his modernist plan became evident after the coronation as the founder of a new royal succession. Previously, he had oppositely pictured himself.

He chose his allies carefully and according to circumstance, so that during Seyyed Zia's brief premiership¹⁴ he cast himself as the protector of tradition against those who would pursue radical reform. Within a year, as he felt more secure in his position as Minister of War, Reza Khan was manoeuvring to establish a firm grip on the civilian levers of power, in particular the legislature. (A. M. Ansari 2007, p. 40)

In the time of his Ministry of War, the Qajar governmental plan to use the skill and consultation of Morgan Shuster (1877–1960)¹⁵, an American lawyer, failed and his mission to organize and improve the Iranian financial structure ended with no desired and planned outcome. Preceding the mentioned failure, Arthur Millspaugh (1833–1955)¹⁶ as the head of the American delegation arrived in Tehran, and his demand accepted to reorganize the finances of the country. Similarly, Millspaugh's reforms were considered a threat to the interests of officials, tribal chiefs, and clergies (Blake 2009). In the meantime, Reza Khan played a vital role to solve the tension in favor of the domestic economic situation. The Minister of War transferred "much of his financial responsibilities to Millspaugh in return for a generous monthly grant which he would use for the upkeep of the army" (A. M. Ansari 2007, p. 41). Although, after becoming the new monarch of Iran, Reza Shah stopped his support to weaken the bureaucratic power of Millspaugh. As Blake indicates, his mission ended due to the resistance against Reza Shah's demands. Hence, Reza Shah turned to Germany for consultations and developmental advice.

¹⁴ Sayyid Ziya al-Dīn Tabataba'ī (June 1889–August 29, 1969) was a prominent Iranian politician and the Prime Minister of Iran (Persia) from February to May 1921 under Ahmad Shah Qajar, whose reign ended to the new and last dynasty of Pahlavi on 15 December 1925.

¹⁵ William Morgan Shuster was an American lawyer, civil servant, and publisher, who was also the treasurer-general of Persia by appointment of the Iranian parliament, from May to December 1911.

¹⁶ Arthur Chester Millspaugh was a former adviser at the U.S. State Department's Office of the Foreign Trade, who was hired to re-organize the Finance Ministry of Iran from 1922–1927 and 1942–1945.

With all of his remarkable achievements, Ahmad Shah had no other choice except to appoint him Prime Minister at the end of 1923. On this occasion, another wise tactic of Reza Shah took place to guide and support the new “Reformist Party” constituted officially by Ali-Akbar Davar (1885–1937)¹⁷ and Abdolhossein Teymūrtāsh (1883–1933). The plans and policies of the mentioned party sounded impudent, courageous, and radical in comparison to that time, e.g., by demanding secularism, i.e., the separation between politics and religion, full constitutionalism, the establishment of a welfare system, and the right of free education. Related to Pahlavi’s instrumentalist approach toward religion, Reza Khan preferred to stand behind the Davar’s party unofficially and “continued to maintain his alliance of convenience with the conservative factions, upholding traditional values in return for their continued support” (A. M. Ansari 2007, p. 41). The result of his double-play and prudent attitude toward Iranian religiosity was the historical cooperation of the Fourth *Majlis*, i.e., the National Consultative Assembly of Iran, with his bill which included universal conscription for a compulsory period of two years. The conscription contained many socio-political alterations and affected many societal classes and deprived them of their traditional privileges. While traditional elites, landowners, and *ulama* were all against his reform plan of the national army, the “secular nationalists” were his only ally to pass the bill successfully. The very secular nationalism which also played the main role to bring the Pahlavi monarchy into power was part of the political and intellectual inheritance of the Constitutional Revolution. As Ansari illustrates, the nationalists believed that Reza Khan is their “revolutionary leader” to build a unified nation under his fundamental reforms. This coalition succeeded in collaborative examinations of the civil service in the Fourth *Majlis* and then passing the whole reform plan of Reza Khan in the Fifth *Majlis* on 11 February 1924 included a wide range of reforms in political, social, and bureaucratic spheres with the first steps of reconstructing the foundations of the body politic and developing the country.

The very pre circumstances of rising the new dynasty during the end years of Qajar shows the important role of *ulama* and religious power along with the instrumentalist policy of the founder of Pahlavi which sometimes seemed to be inevitable in order to renounce the throne with a thoroughly new monarchic line. Reza Khan faced with series of serious objections against his republicanism from both *ulama* and the traditional trade class of the society. The reason behind the reaction of different social classes to be strongly against republicanism was also

¹⁷ Ali-Akbar Davar was a politician and judge and the founder of the modern judicial system of Iran.

diverse. Some officers in the army opposed Reza Khan's suggestions due to their animosity to him or because of their pro-Qajar tendency or strictly speaking, the sense of loyalty to the longtime dynasty till that time. The majority of *ulama* saw republicanism as a threat to religion, Iran as a Shiite homeland, and certainly all their traditional privileges as the only official representative of the religious realm. In this regard and about the different political reactions between *ulama*, there is a historical lesson in the political shift of Hassan Modarres (1870–1937) from anti-republicanism in the late Qajar era to anti-Pahlavi in the early time of the new dynasty. In other words, the mentioned Shia clergy, who became one of the iconic martyrs in the Islamic Republic, encouraged Reza Khan to step back from his republican ideals and indirectly led him to the monarchic way. Lately, he opposed Reza Shah as the founder of a new dynasty.

In that current political scene, there were socialists with a reasonable ambivalent approach toward Reza Khan; they wished to abdicate of Qajar as the main barrier to flourish the country, and they observed Reza Khan as a strong personality to actualize their desired plan, but simultaneously the socialists could not trust him. On the other side, the liberal intelligentsia had their own doubtful political position; they could not trust Modarres, and at the same time they saw the proposal of republicanism as a preparatory to dictatorship by subverting the constitution. Speaking about Realpolitik, none of the mentioned groups were in reality engaged with the very idea of republicanism intrinsically (Martin 2003, p. 73). The vital political concern of all sides was the perilous situation of Iran, which was near to collapse as a country due to the misruling and weakness of Qajar. Two leading factors determined the consensus to support Reza Khan: 1) the assumed potentiality of a nationalistic movement to confront the collected dangers for Iran 2) the personality of Reza Khan as the only possibility to revival the land with consideration of his negative and positive characteristics; a strong politician with the risk of being autocratic.

After the Majlis met on 22 March of 1924 to discuss the legal possibility of changing the constitution in accord with republicanism, the vast amount of *ulama*, merchants, and other social classes of people gathered around the Majlis chanting pro-Shah and anti-republican slogans (A. M. Ansari 2007). In the end, Reza Khan accepted to withdraw republicanism under the considerable political and social pressure against his proposal. Unlike some analyses which represent a permanent coalition between merchants and *ulama*, the Qajar history tells that there was no guarantee that merchants support Shiite clerical position on each occasion. For example, the Shiite clergies opposed the major concession between the government and the British entrepreneur Baron Julius Reuter in 1872, while the prominent merchants wanted to benefit from it. However, the merchants had

no self-confidence and seemingly no independent religious belief to stand against clergies, and in that incident, they also “refused to go along when a court-olama coalition opposed the concession,” which led to repeal it by Naser al-Din Shah in 1873 (M. Bayat 1991, pp. 46, 47). Subsequently, the Shah was forced to dismiss his reformist prime minister Mirza Hossein Sepahsalar (1828–1881).¹⁸ In this sense, it seems that the Shiite clergies could revoke the religiosity of merchants in favor of the Shiite establishment, but the economic advantage of merchants could harm the supposed historical coalition.

To rethinking the role of Shiite clerics, *ulama*, in the time of public debate and confront with republicanism it should be mentioned that there was also a wise and prudent strategy planned by Reza Khan to negotiate with *ulama* about the chance of approval of his fundamental proposal to change the form of ruling in Iran. It means that he used clerical power in favor of his step-by-step plan to gain total power. The result of negotiation was holding back from his republicanism, i.e., the later founder of the Pahlavi monarchy left his republican plan and instead of it, he bought the support of Shiite clerics, and he made himself free from all the strong public discontent due to his proposal. The most important point related to the instrumentalist approach of Pahlavi toward religion is that Reza Khan not only abandoned his proposal but also promised to defend Islam. The latter proclaim had a vital political message to the traditional society of Iran with the decisive presence of Shiite clerics. Reza Khan denied the political connotation of republicanism to be against religion and the religious establishment. More importantly, he resigned republicanism in favor of the Shiite authority to bring it later in solidarity with himself to overthrow the Qajar dynasty. His political motivation to move toward a republican¹⁹ system after the Qajar dynasty is not still completely clear, but at least he perceived republicanism as a more suitable

¹⁸ Ādamīyat (2006) notes that the popular belief about the opportunistic motivation of Naser al-Din Shah or his prime minister on the occasion of the Reuter concession in 1872 is not necessarily true. He expresses that Prime Minister Mirza Hossein Sepahsalar aimed to encourage the British to invest in the Persian economy, so that the economy can be improved and, more importantly, the Qajar dynasty can obtain a security guarantee for the territorial integrity of Persia in front of Russians. Ādamīyat asserts that the political aspect of the Reuter concession dominated its legal and economic aspects (pp. 335–369).

¹⁹ As Sandel (1988) reminds us, there is no clear distinction between a republic system and a republican one and whether both adjectives refer to the same body politic or not. At least, it is clear that a representative form of democracy where the power rests with voters is the shared element in the democratic-republican government and the constitutional monarchy. Although, there are many cases of self-proclaimed republican systems with authoritative nature by manipulating the process of election and directing the votes and voters in the desired and planned way of rulers. In this form of authoritarianism, the electoral system is

political structure, metaphorically a more fertile womb, which his desired reforms and his developing plan could take place in it. In other words, the then changes in Turkey made him persuaded that republicanism is the integral form for his domestic reforms.

About the relation of Reza Shah with the Shiite clerical establishment, there is also a still vague claim that institutionalizing Shiism in Iran occurred under his reign by establishing *howzeh-ye elmieh* Qom (The Islamic Seminary of Qom). The anti-Shah opposition uses *Pahlavite Shiism* partly due to the establishment of Qom Seminary as the first major shift of institutionalizing Shiism after Safavid (Nikfar 2016a). The conclusion is supposed to prove that Shiite clergies were empowered even by an anti-clerical figure like Reza Shah Pahlavi. However, there is some historical negligence in this claim. Firstly, Qom was religiously important since the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736), and its vitality as a center of Shia Islam decreased in parallel with the decline of Qajars. Secondly, the founder of *howzeh-ye elmieh* in Qom, i.e., the prominent Shia cleric and *marja* Shaikh Abdolkarim Haeri Yazdi (1859–1937) immigrated to Qom in 1922, due to the invitation of the city's religious leaders to move there and revive its "atrophied seminaries." Following the acceptance of Haeri to restore Qom seminaries to its previous effective state, his move to the city brought many of his followers as such. As Sussan Siavoshi draws the reasonable conclusion, "the congregation of these religious learned men in Qom enable [*sic*] Haeri quickly to establish a *howzeh-ye elmieh*" (Siavoshi 2017, pp. 30, 31). The third reason is that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I led to conflicts between religious leaders in Najaf and British forces. As a result, some major clergymen were expelled from Najaf and ended up in Qom. Haeri made Qom an important center of Shii seminarian education within a few years. Therefore, the immigration of Haeri and his disciples would make Qom a significant center of Shii seminaries in any case.

However, it is important to be aware of the fragile relationship of Haeri with Reza Shah. In that time, sporadic clerical resistance against the Pahlavi policy that

arranged to guarantee the everlasting advantages of the oligarchy who come to power respectively by elections with no actual socio-political changes or development in providing the public good or proposing the rule of law which defends civil rights. There is also the almost newly coined term of "the procedural republic" which is defined as "the triumph of a liberal public philosophy over a republican one, with adverse consequences for democratic politics and the legitimacy of the regime" in order to prevent *the tyranny of the majority* which Tocqueville warned about it. Therefore, instead of letting an unlimited majority rule, both judicial and bureaucratic procedures limit the power of majoritarian democracy to guarantee the rights of the minority (p. 67).

restrains the Shiite clerical power from its former privileges were all defeated. Moreover, some clergies and their activities became subject to governmental control or restrictions. As Zirinsky (2003) indicates, it seems that Reza Shah pursued a dual policy at that time; the process of dismantling the clerical power was followed by the denunciation of capitulations. "It had the further advantage of making it clear to supporters of the ulama that this lessening of clerical power was a price which had to be paid in order to reduce the 'special rights' of foreigners in the country" (p. 90). In these circumstances, as Siavoshi (2017) notes, Ayatollah Haeri as the leader of Qom's seminary, "calculating the risk of challenging the state and decided to take a quietist approach. The decision proved to be prudent since the Qom religious center suffered less than many others" (p. 32). In fact, the conservatism of Ayatollah Boroujerdi kept Qom out of *the public policy arena* (Akhavi 1980, p. 102).

More importantly, the future of Qom seminary was still doubtful under the Reza Shah's reign. The Shiite seminary experienced a period of being free from the governmental burden only after his abdication in 1941. The successor of Haeri pursued the same quietism. Ayatollah Hossein Boroujerdi Tabataba'i was adherent to Haeri's pragmatism and his administrative skills. Under his leadership, Qom seminary entered a period of stability and prosperousness. Boroujerdi himself was an exception in the contemporary history of Shiism who was entitled to *marja al-taqlid al-tām* due to his reputation as a pious and learned *marja*. He followed Haeri's prudent policy not to get involved in a political controversy with the government. Although, his political inactiveness did not prevent him from pursuing his efficiency as a prominent actor to build a mutual constructive relation with the Pahlavi monarchy (Siavoshi 2017). With all of these circumstances, the revived Qom seminary under Reza Shah was not a result of a cooperative plan between the clerical establishment and the government. Therefore, it cannot be taken as a historical fact to prove the claim of anti-Pahlavi ideology that Reza Shah empowered Shiism by his assistance or allowance of constituting *howzeh-ye elmieh*.

3.2.2 Mohammad Reza Shah and Religion: A Paradoxical Monarchy or a Monarchy That Tried to be Secular in a Paradoxical Society

The Pahlavi monarchy seems like a paradoxical phenomenon in Iranian political history; it is woven with secular policies and religious appeasement. The father and son (Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah) both played with the religious establishment in order to keep on their own plan of development. Their internal policy toward Islam, popular religious beliefs, and the Shia establishment

became a pretext for its opposition to claim that the last monarchy was itself a cause of the religious revolution by empowering clerics, peculiarly during the Shah's reign. The historical evidence of the mentioned objection is some cases of religious censorship in the Ministry of Culture and Art, the alleged budget of religious institutions, and ultimately the personal religious beliefs of the very Shah of Iran. About the governmental censorship in favor of religion, Amirshahi (2003) the prominent Iranian novelist, articulates her own experience of facing censorship in one of her books. The Ministry of Culture informed her that one of the short novels contains an insult to religious beliefs. At the same time, many anti-clerical or anti-religious works have been published in that time, like the novels of Aziz Nasin (1915–1995), Turkish writer and humorist, or the works of Sādeq Chubak (1916–1998), the Iranian novelist. Therefore, it seems the governmental censorship was limited to extreme anti-religious contents, though it was more sensitive to the Marxist texts. Homayoun (2009a) identifies the censorship under the Shah by its unsystematic, arbitrary, and unordered. Many institutions and ministries were responsible for controlling the contents of publications; Majlis, *Darbār* (the royal court), the army, the cabinet, and later the SAVAK. Homayoun believes that many censored contents had no harm to the existence of the system and many of the contents ordered to be published by an official had a devastating effect on the system.

Nevertheless, there are some paradoxes and overemphasizing in the narration of the Iranian anti-Shah analysis regarding the way of representation of the Shiite clerical authority after dismissing Mosaddeq in 1953. Along with the detailed discussion of the praised post-Reza Shah period in section 3.3.1, it is needed to revise the historical narrations of the clerical power to assess the relation of Pahlavi with Shiite clergies in that time. On one hand, Iranian libertarianism claims that the Pahlavis oppression led to the desecularization of the political atmosphere and made mosques the center of politics instead of universities. The replacement of religious centers in the position of “secular” places became the basis for inferring that “control of social and cultural spaces was in the hands of the Shi'i clerical hierarchy” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 56). First of all, the location and arrangement of the mass gathering is not an inherent entity to identify the political orientations. Mosques are basically a religious place, but universities were also religionized and under the influence of religious discourse in the 1960s and 1970s. Secondly, it is overstating narration to picture the Shiite clerical authority as the dominant force in almost all socio-political realms in pre-revolutionary Iran. Other scholars narrate the then circumstances in an opposite way to the assumption that “the Shi'i clergy enjoyed relative freedom of access to religious institutions and practice” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 57).

Between 1972 and 1977, the religious leaders in Iran found themselves under constant attack. The holy endowments (*owqaf*) were increasingly put under government control, mosque meetings and prayer sessions were infiltrated by the secret police ... the religious publishing houses in Tehran and Qom (e.g., *Sherkat-i Entesharat*) were closed down, religious student organizations on the nation's campuses were disbanded ... mullahs and mujtahids were regularly arrested, imprisoned, interrogated, and even executed. (Bill 1982, p. 25)

The aim does not compare two overwhelming narrations and concludes that the circumstances were in accord with liberal values. The missed point in the Iranian libertarianism, as an important speculative view, is to neglect that the Pahlavi monarchy after the 1950s had one of its most confliction with the radical Shiite clergies. The then Shiite establishment was apolitical, and Khomeini had many writings and speeches against the clergies and what he called regressive Mullahs (*Akhūndhaie Mortaje*). Khomeini used the mentioned term to devaluate the apolitical tendency in Islamic seminaries and their Shiite piety to make the distance from the politics, which prevent him from gaining the clerical support in his struggle against the Pahlavi monarchy. The confrontation of Khomeini with dissident Shiite clerics is discussed in section 2.2.5, and here there is no aim to reduce the claim of the Iranian libertarians to a limited implication.

Nevertheless, the main issue is to perceive the process of transforming the majority of neutral Mullahs into the soldiers of the revolutionary agenda of Ayatollah Khomeini. The collective interest of the Shiite clerical establishment, i.e., "economic and social power" (Keddie 1983), and the Shiite historical capability to switch from quietism into the even militancy approach are part of the possible explanations. As Keddie reminds us, the land reform, which was followed by major cultural modernization under the White Revolution includes women's suffrage, changed the historic partnership of the Iranian kingship and the clerical establishment.

The position of the *ulama* seems bound to continue in general decline as literacy, secular schools, and scientific education spread; as Islamic practices regarding the relations of the sexes and other matters are increasingly ignored; and in so far as some of the *ulama* can be identified with a self-seeking opposition to reform. (Keddie 1971, p. 17)

Therefore, the Pahlavi monarchy after 1963 lost the support of both many ulama and landlords. The benevolent autocracy of the Shah, then, could only invest in the Western-educated modernizing young intellectual and scientific élite. Nevertheless, the investment had prerequisites which the system and the way of

the ruling could not pursue. As Amir Arjomand articulates, “the integrative revolution” is supposed to bring inception, pace, and continuity instead of disruptiveness. The White Revolution made unprecedented urbanization. The literacy and higher education and inviting the rural periphery to join the national economy all “in the considerable enlargement, if not the creation, of a public sphere. There is a great increase in popular political awareness and the masses- especially the urban masses” (Amir Arjomand et al. 1984, pp. 1, 2). Therefore, the middle class wanted to be integrated into a participatory political system, which the Pahlavi monarchy could not provide for them.

Notwithstanding, the Iranian libertarianism believes that the Shah acted “in the interest of Islamic policies” by suppressing his secular opponents. However, the same perspective articulates that it “does not mean that the regime worked outright to strengthen the clergy’s position; it did not. It simply suggests that the government was unable to destroy the institutions in which Islamic politics were active” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 57). Regardless of what is meant by “destroying” and that is against supposed adherence to the liberal values, the Iranian libertarianism makes confusion between “secular opposition” and “liberal opposition” or “patriotic opposition.” Although, the suppression of the Shah included almost all possible dissident positions. In general, the Shah was indeed more obsessive about the Marxist forces, and he was no pessimistic about the public atmosphere in the Shiite seminaries. However, it is questionable to claim that the isolation of secular political forces was only due to governmental oppression. It is not quite comprehensible to dissolve the boundary between being secular and being a patriot. The Marxist and Islamist transnationalism could not be a reliable perspective to develop Iran in a way the Pahlavi autocracy pursued it during those decades. The priority for the global struggle against *the unjust order of the world* was not the homeland, and they had no agenda to proceed with the modernization of the Shah, in the case of seizing power. That is why the so-called secular opposition publicly described the Shah as a slave of United States imperialism and capitalism (Trenta 2013).

In fact, the Pahlavi monarchy made interconnected elements of religion and politics into a modern and almost secular bureaucratic arrangement to push forward a traditional society into an “intensive” process of modernizing. The intensity of modernization is a widespread allegation against Pahlavi as the leader of the failed Western development, which isolated the rich from the poor and alienated the middle class. The failure is being justified because of the occurrence of the Islamic revolution in 1979. The historical logic, in this case, goes in the direction of founding the argument on a kind of historical determinism.

There was a spectrum of causes that led to the turmoil of 1979, and the least of them could be the mentioned allegation.

The most paradoxical and self-destructive allegation about the Pahlavi monarchy is to describe it as a traditional form of ruling, which was trying to alienate traditional elements in Iranian society (Eisenstadt 2011). By “tradition,” it meant a vague and ambiguous concept which includes everything and nothing simultaneously. When it becomes clear that by traditional state, they mean autocratic monarchy then other paradoxes appear; all the opposition to the Shah accused him, in a united voice with Khomeini, of standing against public religious belief and at the same time they, themselves, claimed to be secular. The question is: how a secular opposition can deny and condemn secular governmental policies? There is a possible answer, regarding democratic values, that autocratic secularism does not work, and it did not work. By accepting the mentioned answer, another question comes out: Therefore, why a secular opposition stands on the side of religious bigotries? How supporting a radical religious leader could lead, by any means, to democratic secularism? The dilemma of anti-Shah opposition was always apparent: In a traditional society, the first step of secularizing is always from above. Let us not forget that there is no such consensus that all revolutionary affairs can be considered as a change from below, e.g., Scruton defends conservatism because he observes the French Revolution as a historical example to impose the desired socio-political structure from above. In this sense, the revolutionary change is against the self-correctible feature of the society, which makes it able to experience constructive reforms from below based on the customs and common laws (Bibliothek des Konservatismus 2017). Moreover, by a joint oppositional policy to support political Islam and to condemn monarchical secularism, no nation in human history achieved a secular democracy. The double-dealing of Iranian leftist revolutionaries lays in the mentioned explanation. In this matter, referring to the personal belief of the Shah as a religious man, in order to picture him as a radical or superstitious person, is a clear act of fallacy; attacking Shah’s personality and neglecting his deeds as the ruler.

To assess the situation of religious minorities, the situation of Bahais in the Pahlavi era is still disputable. One of the historical and controversial examples is the governmental collaboration with a minor radical cleric Shaikh Mohammad Taqi Falsafi (1908–1998) to loot the Bahai pilgrimage in Tehran in 1955. Sanasarian (2000) describes it as “The state knew how to pay lip service to the religious elements even in the most “secular” era of Iran” (pp. 54, 55). Mehrdad Amanat (2012) described him as a pro-Shah cleric and referred to the memoirs of Falsafi which claims the connection between the clerical support to the Shah in 1953 and the appeasement policy of the Shah with clerics in the years after.

Momen (2005) connected the episode to the clerical support of the Shah during the crisis of 1953 and supposed that the Shah “probably felt obligated to the religious establishment” (p. 224). Asadollah Alam (1919–1978)²⁰ believed that “Falsafi managed to fool both the Shah and the military authorities and start a campaign against the Bahá’ís that dragged the country to the edge of disaster” (Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC) 2006, p. 8). In any case, it seems that the government had restored “the old trick of sacrificing the interests of minorities” (Chehabi 2003, p. 213).

The similar incident occurred at the end of the Pahlavi era. The revolutionary turmoil affected the domestic policy of the government to choose the politics of appeasement in order to satisfy the extreme religious demands. The prudential motives of Pahlavi not to confront the entire clerical establishment led to appease the demands of fundamental clergies on the eve of the Islamic Revolution in 1978. According to a survey published by the Bahai World Center, the assessment of SAVAK from the political circumstances led it to transfer a part of the Islamic pressure to the mentioned religious minority.

In the summer of 1978 ... the agents of the government had harassed the Baha’is in several localities in order to transfer onto them the wrath of the anti-government crowds. Baha’is were dismissed from government posts in an effort to bolster the government’s fast-waning popularity. Bahá’í homes were burned by SAVAK (secret police) agents, and in the Shíráz area a high-ranking local cleric turned back anti-Bahá’í mobs incited by SAVAK. (Nash 1986, p. 251)

That is why Sanasarian (2000) is skeptical about praising stories of “The Bahai physician of the shah” or “handful of non- Muslim wealthy industrialists” and assesses it through a series of questions concerning the qualification to attain a position, the relationship with their own communities, and the governmental motivation to appoint them. “Why would Reza Shah appoint Bahais mainly in finance or entrust the Zoroastrian deputy in the Majlis, Keikhosrow Shahrokh, with several burdensome tasks, all of which involved financial responsibilities?” Sanasarian concludes that the appointment of ethnic groups and religious minorities in authoritarian systems cannot be perceived as a consistent policy. In this regard, Sanasarian indicates the fragile situation of non-Muslims in Iran due to the lack of visibility and the inequality of attaining social benefits often follows to be placed in positions of secondary importance. In comparison to ethnic groups,

²⁰ Amir Asadollah Alam was an Iranian politician and the Prime Minister of Iran from 1962 to 1964. He was also Minister of Royal Court, President of Pahlavi University in Shiraz, and Governor of Sistan and Baluchestan Provinces.

the mentioned fragility is more intensive, e.g., due to the lack of any territorial claim by religious minorities, along with other factors, that makes them “obedient subjects of the modern state system, always aware of the menacing alternative.” Moreover, there is an indication of the Iranian Muslim culture as “the presence of a constant duality in their words and actions,” which puts non-Mulism under an everlasting sense of social insecurity. “Ironically, this view was also expressed by Shii Muslim Iranians about themselves, demonstrating a profound cynical sense of self and the other in a whole (nation-) state” (pp. 56, 57). In section 4.1.3, the assessment of the Pahlavi conservatism concerning ethnic groups and religious minorities is also briefly discussed.

In the foreign policy of the Middle East, religion always acts as a key fact. The clerical establishment and the state find ways to meet their mutual interests. During the reign of ‘Abd al-Karim Qasim (1914–1963)²¹ in Iraq, the government started to encourage communist party activity during the fall and winter of 1958 and 1959. It resulted in increasing tension between Baghdad and the Shiite *ulama*. Probably, the most evident instrumentalism of the Shah can be identified in his consent of an anti-communist *fatwa* issued from Iraqi Shiite seminaries. In late winter 1960, one of the leading Shiite notabilities in Iraq issued a *fatwa* extremely denouncing communism. Undoubtedly, Tehran welcomes this *fatwa* due to its own concern with the continuing influential presence of the Tudeh Party, “whose activities might have received encouragement from Qasim’s patronage of the Iraqi Communist Party” (Akhavi 1980, p. 98). The Shah, as a Muslim modernist considered religion as a historical partner of the monarchy in Iran. His instrumentalism to benefit a religious *fatwa* against communists is irrelevant to the principles of secularism. The Shah neglected the necessity of separation between political foundations and religious grounds. To ban communism, it is needed to bring a political and legal argumentation. Religious assistance through *fatwa* means the acceptance of religious interference in politics and jurisdiction. The contradiction of Pahlavi conservatism, discussed in section 4.1.3, appears when we know that the semi-official paper *Ettela’at*, in accordance with the Shah’s preference, pictured him as the pious Shah with “zealous defense of Shiism”, who believes accordingly that “the genuinely pious clergymen must follow the model of Church-state relations in the advanced industrial countries of the West” (Akhavi 1980, p. 108). According to the semi-official paper *Ettela’at*, he

²¹ ‘Abd al-Karim was an Iraqi Army brigadier and nationalist who seized power when the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown during the 14 July Revolution. He ruled the country as the 24th Prime Minister until his fall and death during the 1963 Ramadan Revolution.

invited *ulama* to appeal to the spirituality of Iranian Shiism and leave public policy to the Shah, otherwise “everyone will be the loser.” However, his demands as the genuinely concerned monarch for the “weakened foundations of faith in Iran” (pp. 108, 109) which made it vital for Shiite clergies to become anxious about letting themselves interfere in politics, were against his preference that religious leaders occasionally involve in politics in favor of the government. In other words, he expected that Shiite clergies supported his monarchy when it was needed and simultaneously reminded them only to pursue their sole sacred mission to enlighten the masses and strengthen their moral and religious beliefs.

3.2.3 The Empress and the Political Meeting with “A Respected Ayatollah”

As an ultimate example of the supposed instrumentalist approach of Pahlavi toward religion, it should be mentioned the last months of the last monarchy which were full of unsuccessful attempts to prevent the occurrence of an uncomfortable truth that there is no end to this turmoil except to put an end to the monarchy. The Empress decided to change some regulations in Her Royal Highness office in order to decrease the political tension which was feeding partly, actually in a considerable part, by extreme religious affections against secular domestic policies. She replaced some of his deputies in her office with more religious figures. However, the greater plan was not as simple as the latter. The Empress wanted to gain the top clerical support to confront the revolutionary leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. In this regard, the best candidate was the top Iranian Shia cleric Ayatollah Abol-Ghasem Khoei (1899–1992) who was one of the most influential Twelver Shia Islamic scholars (*marja*) and who was also well-known to be against any Shiite political movement. According to the memories of Reza Taqizadeh²², one of the deputies of the Empress at that time, the mission was planned as a travel of the Empress with some of her deputies, includes him, to Najaf in Iraq where Ayatollah Khoei lived (EmroozNama 2014). The Empress mentioned the date of travel in an interview as November 1978 with an unclear reference as “I had gone to Najaf, the holy city in Iraq, to meet with a respected ayatollah” (F. Pahlavi 2004). Saddam Hussain, as the current vice president, came

²² Reza Taqizadeh is a former professor of international relations at Glasgow University. He started his political life by entering the youth branch of the *Iran Novin Party*. Taqizadeh was also the main and almost the only decisive organizer of the rally, or a pro-Shah demonstration, at the Amjadiyeh Stadium in Tehran to support the constitution and the new cabinet of Shapour Bakhtiar in February 1979.

personally to receive her. However, it was a failed attempt just like the rest in that time. Although The Empress gained the respect and official confirmation of Ayatollah Khomeini about the constitution and Shah, no newspaper at that time was willing to publish it. In fact, the dominating revolutionary fear already took place and foremost in the atmosphere of media and newspapers. Daryush Homayoun²³ has an original narration, as the Minister of Information and Tourism in 1977–78, about the destructive role of editorials and journalists in that time to dedicate the newly political freedom into the hands of the revolutionary fanatics (Homayoun 2009a, pp. 222–232).

The main purpose of the Najaf meeting was “to stabilize the current political status” by a remarkable approval of a high-ranked religious figure (EmroozNama 2014). By refusing newspapers to publish it, no one could be informed about this supposed and potential achievement. Reversely, it had a negative influence in that intensive atmosphere; the same newspapers published a picture of Prince Alireza Pahlavi (1966–2011) who was 13 years old at that time. He took a rosary, or prayer beads, as a playing tool. However, the captured photo of him sent this negative message to the readers that the Royal Family wanted to pretend religious gestures in order to fool Iranians. Therefore, the accusation of being a hypocrite was the only result of a well-planned meeting to confront the religious authority of Khomeini. Nevertheless, the very idea of gaining the support of a great conservative Ayatollah to confront the revolutionary one was a wise plan to generate a religious and clerical barrier in front of Khomeini. Although, the survival instinct woven with Shia history in general and the old opportunistic attitude of Iranian Shia Mullahs in specific could not be changed even with the public announcement of the official confirmation of Ayatollah Khomeini. Specifically, the Shiite establishment had the foresight of its own future interest, when an Ayatollah became the only revolutionary figure in 1978. Consequently, they concluded that the probable collapse of the Pahlavi monarchy is not a case of their familiar sense of self-preservation, but this time it is about a historical chance to increase their interests in a wide national field; ruling as the most influential religious institution on the whole country.

²³ Daryush Homayoun (1928–2011) was an Iranian journalist, intellectual, and politician. He was appointed as the Minister of Information and Tourism in the cabinet of Jamshid Amouzegar. Homayoun was the founder of the daily newspaper *Ayandegan* (the Posterity), and a prominent member of the *Rastakhiz* party (Resurgence party). In exile, he became one of the founders of the Constitutionalist Party of Iran. He is well-known for his accurate analysis and mainly impartial reassessment of Iranian political history. He kept his reputation as an influential opposition leader against the Islamic Republic, but he started to widely criticize the Pahlavi domestic policy along with his sympathy for the overthrown system.

3.2.4 The Inevitability of the Instrumentalist Approach and the Peaceful Religiosity in Pahlavis

From a pragmatist perspective, there is no escape from an instrumentalist approach toward religion to modernize a country under the clerical influence. As it is discussed in sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.4 on the relation of religion with politics, it can be expressed that the approach of Pahlavi monarchy is more similar to Burke than to Rousseau. For, Pahlavis did not consider religion as a mere instrument in the genesis of nations, and they were Muslim modernists who wanted to protect religion under their own simplistic perception of spirituality and monotheism. One of the negligence of the anti-Pahlavi opposition toward the overthrown monarchy is that both Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah were among those Muslims who wanted to modernize and develop their country. The Shah mentioned on the first pages of his memoirs in exile “maybe I committed mistakes during my reign, but my efforts in favor of a prosperous Iran was never a mistake” (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 4). In many phrases, he mentions the regressiveness and the corruption of Shiite clergies during Qajar and the early years of Pahlavi monarchy, but he perceives Iran as an ancient land which its happiness is not necessarily opposed to the Shia Islam (pp. 24–34). He gives the same account from Reza Shah as a ruler who wanted to build a benevolent country, while he was a religious man. According to the semi-official paper *Ettela’at*, “the Shah believes that the principles of *Shi’ism* are dynamic, and this factor makes for its being the most progressive creed in the world, in his view” (Akhavi 1980, p. 108). In fact, the Shah never understood the Pahlavi confliction with “some radical clergies” as a confrontation between the monarchy and the Shiite clerical establishment. The Shah (n.d.-a) emphasizes that the Pahlavi monarchy wanted to defend Iranian spirituality, but not at a cost to bring the country back to 1400 years ago. He even denied the alleged anti-clericalism of Reza Shah, mentioning that his father was only against regressive clerics, not the clerical establishment and that he was a monotheist, a Muslim and an adherent man to the Islamic principles of faith “as I am such a man” (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 30). Let us not forget that the instrumentalist approach to religion was not an exclusive characteristic of the Pahlavi monarchy. The alleged vice was the virtue of the Babi constitutionalists whose efforts paved the path to the Revolution 1905. Mirzā Aqā Khān Kermāni and Shaikh Ahmad Ruhi are considered as the most important pan-Islamists in the Iranian nationalist movement (Keddie 2005, p. 34). Keddie reminds us that they chose a pro-Islamic position in order to devalue Qajar despotism.

When writing anonymously ... [they] presented modernist interpretations of Babism and, later, anti-Islamic and anti-religious ideas. At the same time, in letters and writings under their own names they attacked the Shah and those around him for unbelief and for weakening the land and faith of Islam. They shared the immediate political goal of wanting the overthrow of the Shah, and for this an appeal to the clergy and to Islamic sentiment was helpful. At the same time they had the long-range goal of modernizing and secularizing Iran, for which attacks on Islam and the clergy, which must have represented their more sincere feelings, were necessary. (Keddie 1962, pp. 286, 287)

Moreover, it should be indicated that the relation of the Shah with clergies was a mixture of political instrumentalism and the necessities of *realpolitik*. More importantly, it was not confined to the Shiite *ulama*, and the Shah had his own contact with the Sunni *muftis*. In 1959, the Rector of al-Alazhar declared his *fatwa* to recognize Jafari Shiism as one of the legitimate Islamic sects and schools of law, and the Shah was also involved in similar efforts to conciliate between Sunni and Shiite Muslims and to encourage proximity between different Islamic schools (Akhavi 1980, p. 99). Accordingly, the Shah was under religious-regional pressure for his conciliatory policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. Shaikh Mahmoud Shaltut (1893–1963),²⁴ Rector of al-Azhar, embarrassed the Shah in his telegram by questioning what he called Iran's "pro-Israel" policy. As Akhavi narrates, the Shah responded with the "convenient legalistic argument" that Iranian recognition of Israel was only *de facto*, not *de jure*. More importantly, the Shah "shrewdly" reminded Shaltut that the extension of the recognition in 1950 and its reaffirmation in 1951 were under the premiership of Mohammad Mosaddeq "as you know" (pp. 99, 100).

The Shah praises the Shia Islam and insists that Iranians represent their authentic wisdom through the acceptance of the Shia *Madhhab* and consequently by prevailing over the dominance of the Arab caliphs who occupied ancient Iran (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 10). He glorifies 'Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā, the eighth Shiite Imam buried in Mashhad, as the "sacred honorable Imam" (*Jalil al-Qadr*) (p. 32). The Shah, by his conservative philosophy, emphasizes the vitality of spirituality in the materialized world. In this regard, he considers both Reza Shah and himself as defenders of such a spiritual plane of Iranians which is in harmony and conciliation with their *Madhhab*, their ancient culture, and the desire to be a modern and prosperous nation. To compare the respectful position of Shiite establishment in his dynasty to the repressive behavior of Ayatollah Khomeini,

²⁴ Sheikh Shaltut was a prominent Egyptian Sunni religious scholar and Islamic reformer. As a disciple of Mohammad Abduh's school of thought, Shaltut rose to prominence as Grand Imam of Al-Azhar during the Nasser years from 1958 until his death in 1963.

he mentioned the confiscation, imprisonment, insult, and execution that dissident Shiite clergies had faced within 1979–80. In an interview, he compares Shiite clericalism with similar cases in the history of Christianity. In other words, the Shah defined his position against religious radicalism in general, and he had not considered a specific characteristic in the Islamic will to the power. That is why he decisively denies that Islam is an obstacle to his modernization and reduces the institutional confrontation by personalizing it into the character of Khomeini, whom the Shah referred to as an “isolated priest.” Moreover, in a close opinion to the religious intellectuals, the Shah gives a positive point to the Shia Islam, because it has no official institution like the function of churches in Christianity.

Interviewer: Your Majesty had some misunderstanding the religious leaders in the course of your reforms. Does Your Majesty think that the Islamic religion is a hindrance to your reform plans, or has it been in the past?

The Shah: I don’t think so. Not Islam! The priests, some of them, Yes! But you can say that of all religions. All reformers in the world had to deal with the church, the clergy. Starting from way back in Europe before the Renaissance and then you always have that clash between reform and church. But here we have not anything organized as the church. There are some isolated priests, with whom I had to take some strong measures. (thekinolibrary 2017a)

Even amid his confrontation with the clerical resistance against the White Revolution, the Shah chose religious rhetoric to justify his plan of development for a semi-traditional society. The regressive ulama like Ruhollah Khomeini tried to picture the White Revolution as anti-Islamic which did not specify that the candidates had to be male and Muslim and consequently aimed to enfranchise women. “The Shah responded by mounting a frontal assault on the ulama, describing them as reactionary and opponents of *the Islamic concept of equality*” (Hiro 2013, p. 232). In his last interview, the Shah accused the new “Islamic” government of committing crimes and misdeeds all against Islam. “What they are doing in absolutely contrary to Islam” (Lancast 2010a). Moreover, he reduced the emergence of Political Shiism to the Marxist plan of struggling his dynasty more assertively “by constructing a Marxist Islam” (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 30). His spiritual insight was indeed simplistic, uncritical, or even superficial. However, the denial of his peaceful spiritual vision and equating it to the spiritual aggressiveness of Ruhollah Khomeini is the fallacious judgment of the anti-Shah opposition. The anti-Shah opposition still mocks his personal religious dream when the Shah was

a seven years old kid (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 33) and simultaneously neglect their own support of a radical Mullah when all of them were mature.²⁵

3.3 From the “Possible” Democratization to the Collapse of Pahlavi

3.3.1 The Realpolitik, the Society, and the Constitution

It is almost has become impossible to discuss the relationship between the Iranian conservatism and the religious reformation before 1979 with the neglect of what happened from the last premiership of Mohammad Ali Foroughi under the “young delightful Shah” on 27 August 1941 till the office found Fazlollah Zahedi²⁶ as the new prime minister on 19 August 1953. The way Mosaddeq was dismissed and the subsequent incidents split the country between two antagonist forces and irreconcilable heritages; the pro-Western modernization of Pahlavi against the anti-Western democratization of Mosaddeq (Rahnema 2015, pp. 1–10). Homayoun (2009a) believes that both the Shah and Mosaddeqists took the incident of 1953 too seriously and both cooperated to form a complex and obsession out of it (p. 48). Homayoun, himself, was imprisoned two times during the premiership of Mosaddeq. Homayoun spent six months without any legal reason to be in prison and afterward he and his friends faced the illegal demand of the military commander of Tehran urging them to write a letter of repentance (*tobehnāme*). Due to the intensity of the situation in the last months of Mosaddeq, he released his right-wing prisoners in order to make a balance with the increased power of the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party. For, Mosaddeq, himself, had become anxious about the power of the Tudeh Party. “The Tudeh party was becoming increasingly powerful; efforts were made to bring it under control” (Gasiorowski 1987, p. 265). The role of the Tudeh Party in the crisis needs separate research due to their excessive replacement in the political scene. For example, as Gasiorowski reminds us, in the most intensified days of the crisis “Tudeh crowds remained off the streets and

²⁵ In this regard, it is worth mentioning that Baraheni (1995) blamed Fereidoon Tavallali (1917–1985) in harsh rhetoric due to his glorification of Asadollah Alam. He considers Tavallali’s behavior as an “unprecedented heresy between Iranian poets” and ridicules him to be prone to coming back to his regressive origins (pp. 53, 54). Meanwhile, Baraheni neglects his own sanctification of Ruhollah Khomeini during 1978–99. The question remains unanswered as that which one is more regressive and more heretic.

²⁶ Fazlollah Zahedi (1892–1963) was an Iranian general and statesman who replaced Mosaddeq.

did not attack the pro-Zahedi crowds that appeared on that day" (p. 274). In fact, the Tudeh Party had already turned its back from Mosaddeq. On 20 July 1953, "The Central Committee of the Tudeh further attacked Mosaddeq for capitulation to 'Anglo-U.S. interference'" (Roberts 2012, p. 765).

The third time of Homayoun's imprisonment was in the last months of the Pahlavi monarchy. Therefore, he is a dissident to both Mosaddeq and the Shah, though his adherence remained to the entire overthrown body politic before 1979. He believed that the National Front did not want to lose political power and was ready to risk any costs after 30 Tir 1331 Š./ 20 July 1952. In contrary to the claim of Mosaddeqists, *Tobehnāmeḥ-nevisi* or the governmental demand to write the letter of repentance did not start after the "coup," though its occurrence after dismissing Mosaddeq time was also the Pahlavi wrong deed. In general, the mere crisis of 1953 had thrown an unfair shadow of shame on the system, and all the royal revenge or governmental retribution against Mosaddeqists after the return of the Shah was against any conservative purpose in politics. Similarly, the very confinement and then the house arrest of Mohammad Mosaddeq were all against the necessity of political prudence. Mosaddeq was kept under house arrest at his Ahmadābād residence, until his death on 5 March 1967. The irrationality of the decision more appears when we know that Mosaddeq had all of his contacts, communications, and partly political influence on the National Front from his small city out of Tehran (Banisadr 1984, p. 17). Cumulatively, this political limitation on his life was against human rights, conservative prudence, and the very expediency of the Pahlavi monarchy. The house arrest made Ahmadābād a political pilgrimage for Mosaddeqists till now.

The brief debate in this chapter about the post-Reza Shah period is woven in many parts respectively with the challenge of 1953 and its iconic figure, Mosaddeq, due to the assertion of the Iranian libertarianism that the emergence of Mosaddeq actualized the possibility of democracy and freedom in this period. In other words, the Iranian anti-conservatism considers Mosaddeq as the rightful and eligible outcome of the post-Reza Shah period. The prevailing tendency to describe the post-Reza Shah period (1941–1953) is to represent it under the title of "From the constitutional monarch to the absolute ruler" which is an analysis based on the observation of the government as the main actor in the political scene. The chosen title above is an intentional departure from the cliché that the Shah was able to bring democracy in the mentioned time, and that he was the primary decision-maker to close or open the political space. Similarly, it is a deliberate departure from the cliché that Mosaddeq was the most comprehensive outcome at the end of the mentioned period, and that he was a symbol of democracy against the despotic court of Pahlavi. The mainstream narration is widely

accepting all these presumptions in media, academies, and intellectual debates about the history of the Middle East. However, the current desired subtitle is based on the principal criticism of liberty proclaimers, when their deed is against the principles of liberty, which finds its meaning in political order and within an established framework. In this regard, the Shah had a few choices concerning all domestic and global circumstances and despite what has been portrayed as the *absolute will of the ruler* in an abstract discourse.

Circumstances (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind. Abstractedly speaking, government, as well as liberty, is good. (Burke 2003, p. 7)

Incontrovertibly, the circumstances do not justify the violation against the constitution, and therefore the Pahlavi monarchy suffered from the lack of legitimacy after 1953, whereas the very 1953 incident had no deviation from the constitutional order. Reversely, Mosaddeq had already known that after his “wrong” decision to dissolve the Parliament, the Shah had the right to dismiss the prime minister in the closure of Majlis. Expectedly, the Shah did it, and Mosaddeq refused to accept the official letter of the Shah declared his resignation from the premiership. Mosaddeqists even becloud the constitutional authority of the Shah in the absence of the *Majlis*. However, it had a constitutional consensus and legal precedence in the past.

There had been at least fourteen recess appointments of prime ministers when there was no parliament in session. Mossadeq not only knew this well but had often spoken favorably of Ahmad Shah [Qajar], the King who had made these appointments ... Mosaddeq himself, as late as October 1948, confirmed that the Shah had the right to make such appointments. (Milani 2012, p. 133)

Moreover, Ali Amini (1905–1992)²⁷ who served in his premiership as the minister of finance asserted that Mosaddeq had no team at the time of choosing ministers and he failed to form a group of expert bureaucrats and prominent politicians around himself (Amini 1981, p. 36). Nevertheless, in the study of Iranian political history, it is a prevailing analysis to consider the period between the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 and the end of the premiership of Mosaddeq in 1953, as the golden time to democratize the socio-political body. Some other

²⁷ Ali Amini was an Iranian politician and the Prime Minister of Iran under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi from 6 May 1961 to 19 July 1962.

scholars indicate that in the early 1960s, the Iranian political scene was still influenced by the Western model of thinking. According to H. E. Chahabi (2013), in the then politics dominated by the Shah, the Nationalists, and Ali Amini's circle, there was a reasonable possibility of the chance for a transition to democracy.

On the day in May 1961 when the Liberation Movement of Iran, then the most radical of Iran's constitutionalist opposition groups, was founded, Hasan Nazih, a leading member, said that his party wanted the Iranian governments to function like those of Sweden, Denmark, Britain, and Belgium. ... The world's democracies provided the dominant paradigm for the Iranian opposition. ... In the early 1960s the societal dualism was still diffuse enough to allow both the Shah and the opposition to make appeals to both segments of the Iranian population, albeit on different grounds. ... Cleavages in Iranian society were thus to some extent cross-cutting, a favourable precondition for democracy. (Chehabi 2013, pp. 26–37)

The alternative perspective proposes that the loss of the democratic transition occurred after 1961 due to three reasons: 1) generational demand to make distance from the West, which is discussed in the thesis under the term of *Gharbzadegi* or Westoxification, 2) the alleged disappointment of the democratic forces after the decisive reaction of the Shah against the Islamist riots in 1963, provoked by Ruhollah Khomeini, and 3) the newly-emerged era of the decolonization and the rise of non-alignment forces that intensified the nativist ideology to differentiate the East from the West. On this theoretical basis, Chehabi (2013) explains why "The liberalization of the 1960s ended with the re-equilibration of the Shah's regime and the departure of Ayatollah Khomeini into exile, while the second led to the disintegration of the Shah's regime and Khomeini's return to Iran" (p. 26). Nevertheless, the second narration about the 1960s reminds us that the desired account of the Iranian libertarians about the post-Reza Shah has an opposed perspective. Although both perspectives agree that political oppression was one of the fundamental grounds for the failure of democratization.

The post-Reza Shah period is an example of two different perspectives; the one sanctifies the alleged spirit of freedom over the government as the main barrier and the other defends the necessity of political stability and observes 1941–1953 as the time of anarchy, terror, and instability. The latter is recognizable by short premierships mostly lasted less than one year. It shows the fragility of the political structure to set a steady government. At that time, Iran faced the emergence and fall of the thirteen prime ministers and twenty premierships in almost twelve years. Two prime ministers were assassinated by the then main Islamic terrorist organization, which also assassinated Ahmad Kasravi. The very Shah survived an unsuccessful assassination in an annual commemoration of the founding of

Tehran University on 4 February 1949.²⁸ His opponents even accused him of managing the assassination against himself in order to put more pressure on oppositions and therefore to facilitate evaporating political space and to pave his path toward autocracy. Karim Sanjabi²⁹ (1983) wondered why none of the bullets had any dreadful effect and indirectly accused the Shah of arranging the terror attack against himself to take benefit of it (pp. 91, 92). The very irrational accusation based on the Iranian conspiracy theory is against the first requirement to establish a stable democracy based on mutual trust. However, the everlasting despotic history shapes the people's mentality with its own implications includes the mutual distrust between rulers and citizens. Even the premiership of Mosaddeq is narrated differently from the perspective of religious minorities. His policies had weakened the political authority, and the weakness of the government encouraged bigots to attack non-Muslims.

During the early 1950s, the monarchy was seriously challenged by Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq ... The short period of Mossadeq's influence was accompanied by a weak central government and, in spite of him, it set in motion sporadic attacks against non-Muslims. The West was a target and so were non-Muslims. Mossadeq's removal restored the power of the central government. (Sanasarian 2000, p. 15)

On the other side, there is a discourse that obliged itself to defend democracy over stability or liberal autocracy. The libertarian perspective mainly focuses on the flourish of many political parties, several labor organizations, and a new non-Islamic intellectual discourse that still had its connection to Western values. In this standpoint, the emphasis is on "the phenomenon of unionization," the public participation "through autonomous institutions," the parliamentary revivalism, and the constitutional role of the Shah in the mentioned time (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, pp. 52, 53). Expectedly, the admirers of the post-Reza Shah period consider the royal court and all the politicians and nobles belonged to the system as "a coalition of conservative and reactionary forces," who eventually overthrew the "democratic" Mosaddeq (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 54). However, they neglect

²⁸ The Shah survived the second unsuccessful assassination in the Marble Palace of Tehran on 21 Farvardin 1344 Š./ 9 April 1965.

²⁹ Karim Sanjabi (1904–1995) was the last leader of the National Front before he escaped from Iran on 28 July 1982 due to a verbal declaration of Khomeini which accused him and his party of committing apostasy, due to their planned demonstration against the law of Islamic retribution (*qisas*) in 1981. He served as the minister of culture during Mosaddeq premiership, as a member of the 17th National Assembly, Iranian Majlis, elected from Kermānshāh, and eventually as the minister of foreign affairs in the provisional government of Bazargan after the Islamic Revolution.

that a given secular "elected" prime minister should not appeal to the Sharia law in order to justify the anti-monarchic vandalism in Tehran during the crisis. It seems that Mosaddeq was a loyal dissident to the monarchy and he tells the court about his invitation to the Shah to come back from Rome, to prevent the necessity of calling the regency council (*Šūrā-ye Saḷṭanat*) (J. Bozorgmehr 1988, p. 180). In the same way, He was honest to claim he did not know about the anti-Shah riots in the streets that led to pulling statues of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi to the ground. However, what he adds as the second reason is a sign of his regressive tendency or his hesitancy as a modern bureaucrat in front of the Islamism which has rooted in the Sharia. Briefly, Mosaddeq articulates that he had no idea what happened to the Shah's statues in Tehran, but he reminds the court that the Sharia prohibits making human statues (p. 179). Indirectly, he put himself in the position to represent the views of the Shiite clerical establishment and to label the royal statues and anti-Islamic sculptures. Indeed, it is not the duty of reformist bureaucrats to support religious bigotries as an excuse for uncontrolled incidents during a political crisis.

In this context, libertarianism means a political philosophy that belongs mostly to left-wing views concerning its social issues, regardless of its emphasis on individual freedom. Accordingly, Iranian libertarians are skeptical about political authority and state legitimacy peculiarly under the Pahlavi era and exclusively about the controversial incident of 1953. In this perspective, the royal court and the Shah were already in the wrong position in front of a "democratic" prime minister who stood on the right side of history. However, they neglect that regardless of rumors and facts about the role of the National Front in the terror of Haj Ali Razmara (1901–1951), the military leader and the 33rd prime minister of Iran, it is indisputable that Mosaddeq and his party benefited from his death. In fact, what the Shah describes as the killing of General Ali Razmara "by the religious extremists" (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 54) in March 1951 "thus paving the way for the assumption of power by Mosaddeq two months later" (Zabih 1982, p. 86). Mosaddeq, "in a dramatic move typical of his political career" took refuge in the Parliament due to the alleged threat of avengement by *Fedāʾtān-e eslām*. However, on the eve of the end of Mosaddeq's first term of premiership subsequent by the appointment of Ahmad Qavam as a legendary anti-clerical politician, Iran faced an Islamist-nationalist-communist coalition aims to reinstate Mosaddeq. One of the early results of reinstating Mosaddeq to the power was catastrophic; after the uprising of 17 July 1952 which gained the victory to bring Mosaddeq back to the office, *Fedāʾtān-e eslām* retrieved its former terrorist activity in an expansionist manner. As Zabih articulates, their new plan after the inauguration of Mosaddeq's second term was "the elimination of several non-Shia 'heretic'

groups” (p. 87) which led to the terror of some Bahai leaders and the brutal murder of Ahmad Kasravi in the chamber of the trial judge in 1948. It is essential to know that the Islamist-nationalist-communist coalition appeared at least three times during the Shah’s reign; 1952, 1963, and 1979. The middle belonged to demonstrations against the White Revolution, especially secular sections like women’s suffrage. As Keddie (1971) analyzes the uprisings of 1963, “the anti-governmental movement of this period was a strange amalgam, not unknown to Iranian history, of religious traditionalists and modernizing democrats and leftists, with popular support based on a variety of grievances as well as faith in the ulama leaders” (p. 17). Although “secular” opponents of the Shah were mostly in solidarity with Islamists and regressive clerics, the Iranian libertarianism (under the term of *Pahlavite Shiism*) pictures the Shah’s policy as a peculiar Islamization (Nikfar 2016b).

Back in 1952, Mosaddeq has the same policy as the Shah toward religious institutions during his premiership. His cabinet was passive or positive about the empowerment of mosques to conduct their Shiite ceremonies more assertively (Bagley 1971). It is not a reasonable attitude to condemn a policy when the Shah pursued and to neglect it if Mosaddeq did the same deed. Related to the perspective of Iranian libertarians, the emphasis on picturing Mosaddeq as a “secular democrat” in front of the Shah who is represented as a “cleric-empower despot” is an unproven presumption or a pro-democratic dogma. Moreover, the issue of oil in the entire Middle East becomes a rich material for conspiracy theories. The anti-Western sensations, the occupied minds of imperialist plans, the anti-Semitism (“9/11 Conspiracy Theories on Arab and Iranian TV Channels 2004–2005” n.d.), and the xenophobic nationalism all are partly being traced into the oil.

The history of oil in the Middle East highlights the importance of foreign interventionism in setting precedents and foundations for contemporary conspiracist discourses, both by providing stark and real examples of collusion and plotting by foreign powers, and by raising the suspicions and mistrust held by Middle Easterners, both elites and wider populations, towards the West. ... The particularly venomous rhetoric, including conspiracism and language analogous to it, that defines the US relationship with post-revolutionary Iran stems in part from the role of oil, including in the period from 1953 to the revolution. To Iran, the US was interventionist and exploitative of Iran during this time, and supported and propped up a puppet regime, led by the Shah, at least in part for the purposes of gaining oil access and wealth from Iran. (Gray 2010, p. 69)

Nevertheless, the mutual mistrust between Mosaddeq and the Shah was not unfamiliar, but the final scene as a legal dismiss that subsequently led to the foreign interference and to set trials all made it an unrecoverable wound in the body politic under the Pahlavi era. The relation had precedence when Mosaddeq "was arrested in 1940 and imprisoned in an inhospitable area of the country for six months. He was allowed to return to his estate only through the mediation of the Crown Prince, Mohammad Reza" (Azimi 2008, p. 84). The Shah explains his sense of mistrust to Mosaddeq in his memoirs when he was in exile after 1979. The Shah claims that there were many contradictions between the sayings and deeds of Mosaddeq, e.g., he provoked the public anti-imperialist feelings and simultaneously made his acceptance of premiership conditional to the British approval. The Shah describes Mosaddeq as an expert orator who did not act in accord with his sayings and promises. He accuses Mosaddeq of being in a secret connection with Britain. The Shah adds that the Anglo-Saxon imperialist policy appoints those with anti-imperialist gestures in order to hide their subordination to foreign forces (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, pp. 54–59). The recent analysis has a tone of conspiracy theory. Parviz Sabeti, former SAVAK deputy, affirmed the judgment of the Shah. In his memoirs, Sabeti (2012) claims that Mosaddeq was a member of a Masonic lodge, while he refers to a Persian book about Freemasonry in Iran. Sabeti came to an unjustified conclusion that Mosaddeq was dependent on Britain due to his alleged Masonic membership. However, the reference of Sabeti is full of conspiracy theories, and similar accusations to other politicians and intellectuals from Mirzā Malkam Khān to Mohammad Ali Foroughi (Katiraei 1976, pp. 70, 71). The author founded his accusation to Foroughi on the mutual pessimism between Foroughi and Kasravi. In other words, Katirae used the accusations of Kasravi against Foroughi to degrade Foroughi (p. 135). The author accused Foroughi of committing treason against the country and even of provoking a brutal reaction to Kasravi due to agitating religious mobs against him (p. 137). There is no evidence that Foroughi publicly uttered an accusation against Kasravi by attributing the blasphemy to him. Such a reference, cannot prove the claim of Sabeti in his affirmation of the Shah's anti-Mosaddeqist sentiment.

The general assessment of the Shah on the whole premiership of Mosaddeq is negative due to his alleged failure of making a balance between reality and ideals. He could not deal with the economic crisis, and the oil revenues were utterly suspended, according to the memoirs of the Shah. Relating to the aimed issue, it is not a theme of the judge to evaluate the claims of the Shah against his dismissed prime minister or the claim of Mosaddeq against the royal court and his nullification of the legal position of his trial. Many opposing historical details are still used from both sides to approve their own claims. There are some other

points related to discuss the claim that the post-Reza Shah period had a historical capacity for democratization. Revising the relationship between the Shah and Mosaddeq and the similarities between both is a key fact. First, it is hard to find any harsh criticism against Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in the memoirs of Mosaddeq which was written during his imprisonment. There are three reasons for his mild assessment of Shah, while he attacked the very legitimacy of the trial and a part of the royal court severely. Mosaddeq died in 1967, and his whole life lied under the reign of the Shah. Therefore, a probable fear of criticizing the Shah, as he criticized Mosaddeq in his exile after 1979, is not far from reality. Moreover, Mosaddeq was a dissident of the Pahlavi monarchy but not an enemy of it. Finally, there is no evidence to claim his probable republican feelings or the aim to overthrow the monarchy. On the contrary, Mosaddeq considered himself as a true adherent to the constitutional monarchy. Back to the mutual mistrust, both the Shah and Mosaddeq were suffering from being insecure in their political life. The sense of insecurity derived from the mentioned mistrust, not only between the Shah and Mosaddeq but also between the Shah and his men as well as between Mosaddeq and his friends.

About the post-Reza Shah period, it is being acknowledged that “there was no continuous tradition of the modern political process in Iran” (Mirsepassi 2004, p. 68), but the exaggeration on the capacity of the mentioned period is also being asserted simultaneously as “the rare historical possibility of constructing a democratic political structure” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 52). There is an assumption to conclude the existence of a democratic political atmosphere from mere emerging different political views in the post-Reza Shah period (Mirsepassi 2004, pp. 66–69). The assumption reaches a determinist axiom that the end of 1953 would be a democracy if the Shah did not commit or cooperate with a “coup” and if the Mosaddeq collation could stay united and resist against the royal court. It is hard to find another element in the desired story from Iranian libertarians, e.g., autocratic deeds of Mosaddeq and constitutional adherence of Shah. The attribution of inflexibility or dogmatism to Mosaddeq is only acknowledgeable “from the point of view of his Western antagonists” (Rahnema 2015, p. 290) or their installed monarch, i.e., the Shah, after 1953. However, Ali Amini (1981), who served as his minister, believed that the personality of Mosaddeq was not cooperative and he was an almost alone politician who even accused his deputy ministers of being British puppets (pp. 42, 43). Amini indicates that Mosaddeq’s xenophobic anti-British sensations went to an excessive and unreasonable negative observation. In this sense, both the Shah and Mosaddeq are similar in their political loneliness and autocratic characteristics.

Moreover, Homayoun (2009a) reminds us that the whole two years of Mosaddeq's premiership were under martial law and more than 400 newspapers were banned while he was in the office (p. 215).

The belief about the inherent conflict between being conservative and being progressive is evident in the speculative political hypothesis on the period 1941–53. Accordingly, the Shah is a symbol of regressive politics because of his conservative attitude, and Mosaddeq is an iconic figure of progressive politics due to his non-conservative policy. Moreover, it is not clear whether the counter concept of conservatism in this sense is revolutionary or democratic. It is one of the anti-Shah axioms that all of his dissidents supposed to be a democratic force due to their mere opposing against Pahlavi. In this regard, the valuation of any freedom fighter can be inferred by their claim to be a freedom fighter. In other words, it is enough to consider a political dissident as a democratic figure because of his discontent with the Pahlavi policy. In the mentioned perspective, Mohammad Ali Foroughi can only be considered as a politician who served dictatorship against anti-Pahlavi libertarians. Therefore, Foroughi cannot be considered as a part of the democratization of Iran due to his vigorous efforts to establish a secular judiciary and a modern bureaucracy. In other words, Foroughi belonged to the elite officials while democracy; in this viewpoint, is only existent in the society. Expectedly, there is a vertical relationship between society and government, one is represented as a ready entity to generate a democracy, and the other is pictured as a barrier against it.

However, the same differentiation between two perspectives enters in the most controversial period of Iranian history, likely more than the Islamic Revolution, as the two terms of premierships under Mohammad Mosaddeq, with five days of the premiership in between under Ahmad Qavam³⁰ from 17 July 1952 till 22 July. The short political pause in Mosaddeq's premiership and the end of it both represent a crisis in the modality of power. The libertarian perspective coined Mosaddeq as an iconic figure who was the sum of all supposed democratic endeavors after the downfall of Reza Shah till the "coup" in 1953 which "obliterated any possibility of democratic politics in Iran" (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 55).

The next 25 years of Shah's reign is considered as the time of absolute monarchy with the successful suppression of opposition groups on one hand and the freedom of clergies to interfere in the socio-cultural atmosphere on the other hand. In this view, the conclusion is that the Shah is the most responsible figure

³⁰ Ahmad Qavam (1873–1955), was a prominent politician who served as Prime Minister of Iran five times during both the Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties.

for the birth of the “reactionary modernism” and for “the shift in the Iranian intellectual paradigm from secular modernist to Islamic romanticist” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 58). The very incident of the 1953 “coup” is considered, along with the infamous 1909 oil contract and other similar affairs, as a crucial shift “that transformed the demand for independence into profoundly hostile, anti-Western sentiments” (Mirsepassi 2017, p. 43). However, the defenders of the idea that the post-Reza Shah period could be ended with democracy during the premiership of Mosaddeq recognize that the failure had more causes inside the proclaimers of liberty other than the Pahlavi barrier.

Several problems within the progressive movement itself contributed to its fall: the Tudeh Party’s suspicion of Mossadeq’s pro-American sentiments, which inspired agitation against him; the Tudeh Party’s unconditional support for Soviet foreign policies; the ambivalent nature of the National Front coalition; and tensions between the radical-nationalist forces and religious leaders. (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 54)

Nevertheless, the mentioned pro-Mosaddeq narration usually neglects the defects in his short reign and some authoritarian elements of his character. Since the middle of August 1953, Mosaddeq started to seize all levers of power. He “had rid himself of both houses of parliament ... he had suspended the Supreme Court, curtailed the authority of the Shah, taken the army under his wing, [and] launched the Societal (National) Security Act to cow his opponents” (Bayandor 2010, pp. 62, 63). Moreover, Radio Tehran in his premiership became broadcasting propaganda of his cabinet by devaluating the constitution and mocking those who pretend to be sympathetic with the current constitution. More importantly, Radio Tehran personalized the government by picturing Mosaddeq as “the leader of the Iranian nation,” and by supporting his manipulating referendum that “excluded many who could be expected to vote against him” in order to dissolve parliament and give power to the prime minister to make law (Roberts 2012, pp. 765–767). From the way he had centralized the power into his own premiership, the way he had dealt with the Majlis, and from his dualistic play with the court and his intolerable reaction to opponents, it is not easy to symbolize Mosaddeq as the only hope of democracy against the Shah. Mosaddeq’s premiership could be an end to the ancient despotism in Iran if he would estimate his power, his public support, and his political coalition in a realistic manner. The following phrase from Lijphart (1936-), Dutch-American political scientist, is relevant to explain the undemocratic characteristics of Mosaddeq.

Plural societies may enjoy stable democratic government if the political leaders engage in coalescent rather than adversarial decision-making. Elite coalescence may

be motivated by an awareness of the dangers inherent in segmental cleavages and a desire to avert them. The theory that plural societies cannot sustain stable democratic regimes then becomes a self-negating prophecy: elites cooperate in spite of the segmental differences dividing them because to do otherwise would mean to call forth the prophesied consequences of the plural character of the society. An alternative or additional factor predisposing political leaders to be moderate and cooperative is the prior existence of a tradition of elite accommodation. (Lijphart 1977, pp. 99, 100)

The irresolvable political tension between the prime minister and the Shah brought Iran to an era of distrust and resentment or *ressentiment*.³¹ The intensity and the targeted object of resentment "arise from the processes of comparison, frustration, and oppression" (Banning 2006, p. 74). The resentment is a personal or public feeling derived from its social roots of being oppressed or of the perception to be oppressed. The difference is in various parts of the thesis explained by referring to the unfertile relation of the Pahlavi monarchy with the middle class. It is a part of the truth that the essence of liberty is a critical entity, and that is why democracy is an art of the reconciliation between fragility and stability. In other words, the only permanent, stable political structure is the fragile one. This paradoxical gestalt derives from the very spirit of public political participation and the democratic state of affairs. However, the other side of the truth is being neglected by those who criticize the Shah specifically in the mentioned period; there must appear a political order out of the chaotic era and trembling structure. Otherwise, Edmund Burke (2003) told us a long time ago that "the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess," while he suggests considering "our liberties in the light of an inheritance" (p. 30).

As an avoidance from ahistorical comparison, it should be pointed out that there was an impressive constitutional precedent in British history back to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the similar Iranian tradition was a short period of failure. Therefore, Burke's teachings seem to be unavailable in Iranian politics, theoretically and practically. In this regard, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi usually answers the question about the Shah and Mosaddeq by firstly inviting the Iranian public to look at the future instead of stopping in the past and secondly by suggesting that there should be a supreme court to act as the final decision maker in the tension between the prime minister and the monarch. The latter suggestion, as he agrees and names it "a lesson from the past," is a solution for similar conflicts in the future (R. Pahlavi n.d., p. 19). However, the past remained questionable

³¹ The difference between the two concepts is a subject of countless debate, but it seems that *ressentiment* is a coinage of Nietzsche and has a more philosophical origin, while *resentment* has more applicability into the social sciences.

for both sides. Mosaddeq by declaring the emergency and starting to act like a dictatorial prime minister who wanted to expand his power in every possible way could affect the role of a given supreme court, and when he could not do it, then the Royal Court would do the same. In the absence of an influential constitutional tradition and predominant independent judicial procedures, the foreign forces will interfere in a domestic crisis in favor of each side that has the support of the public. At that time, it seems that the Shah was popular and gained the support of the Iranian public against the disputable policy of Mosaddeq, which brought Iran into the economic crisis.

It is still an unanswered question even for Mosaddeqists (J. Bozorgmehr 1988, p. 68; Rahnema 2015, p. 271) that why the supposed popular prime minister never called his own people for a mass demonstration in his favor, while the June and July of 1953 were daily facing with demonstrations by pro- and anti-Mosaddeq (Gasiorowski 1987). As an enlightening example of the extreme disputability in the Iranian political culture which prevents any relative consensus over the past, it is needed to illustrate that even the popularity of the Shah or Mosaddeq is the controversial issue in the Iranian debates. Daryush Homayoun believed that Shah was more popular than Mosaddeq, while some scholars believe that “the Shah was deeply preoccupied with Mosaddeq’s popularity among the people” and that Mosaddeq had “persistent popularity,” referring to a report of British officials after “the coup” (Rahnema 2015, pp. 1, 13). In this matter, it is likely to suppose that the popularity of Mosaddeq became increased due to the sensitivity of Iranian Shiite culture about the Manichaean emotions in favor of good and against the evil. Therefore, the incidents after his dismissing could give an impression to Iranians that Mosaddeq was an oppressed in front of the Shah as an oppressor. “The feeling of constant victimization may be seen as a facet of Iran’s political culture. It can also easily turn into an ideology” (Perthes et al. 2008, p. 68) Again, Homayoun was right, regardless of his political siding, that the open society and the democratic government are the outcomes of a specific consensus and agreement between citizens, which Iranians did not own and it will not be attained if they cannot pass their disputable historical moments with the virtues of fair-mindedness. “The past is part of our collective self-consciousness and is our vital motivation in politics. That is why we must reach a national agreement about contemporary Iranian history to open the possibility of forming a national agreement about the future” (Homayoun 2007, p. 17).

Eventually, the clerical-monarchical coalition in front of the turmoil in 1953 is one of the main focuses from the Iranian libertarians to infer the regressiveness of the Pahlavi monarchy despite all its modern and secular gestures. In this matter, there is multi-dimensional negligence about the existence of regressive features

in the National Front, and the role of the clerical-Mosaddeqist collation to bring him back to the office on 17 July 1952. Similarly, Iranian libertarianism neglects the reasonable fear of Shiite *ulama* on the excessive influence of the pro-Soviet Tudeh party (Davari 2005), and the fragility of the Pahlavi continuity after 1940 which led it to draw a flexible policy with Shiite clergies. For example, the Iranian libertarianism focuses mostly on the support of the Shah by the capricious political cleric Abolqasem Kashani (1882–1962) in early 1953 and neglects the longer precedence of Kashani as a clerical wing of Mosaddeq before the final separation (Zabih 1982).

3.3.2 The Expeditious Collapse of the Pahlavi System

The political leaders at the end of their times seem to be unaware and unintended agents of the spirit of revolution. The contingency of any foresight never becomes real, and some impossible prospect comes to reality. They think some radical reforms would stop the wave of discontent. However, these actions agitate the speed of changes (Tocqueville 2011). As Alexander Tocqueville wrote in *The Ancien Régime and the French Revolution* about the events of 1789 and the unpredictable entity of revolutions, the revolutionary situation is not something usually predictable or able to be stopped from happening.

Not even Frederick the Great, for all his genius, sensed what was coming. He was in contact with it yet failed to see it. Indeed, his actions were in accord with the spirit of the Revolution before the fact. He was its precursor and, in a manner of speaking, its agent. Yet he did not see it looming on the horizon, and when at last it did show its face, the remarkable new features that would set it apart from a host of other revolutions initially went unnoticed. (Tocqueville 2011, p. 11)

Monarchical states are especially vulnerable for their centralization and political monism around only one figure, i.e., the king. The state could have a repressive function and makes the whole process of development to be reversed. The fact that revolutions often owe their success more to internal failure and inability than to the power of revolutionary forces leads us to reconsider the structure of the Pahlavi monarchy. The ongoing and established regime is inherently one of the central parts of the revolutionary cause. The other is the status and structure of the oppositions. The fragility of the political system is the main element of the realization of a revolution. The centralization reduces the pluralistic nature of society and doubles political fragility. According to Amir Arjomand (1988), monarchies exclusively are more fragile and more vulnerable to destructive political crises.

They attract all the discontent and project it to a single person. The hatred changes from the defects of the regime to the king. It was the same about the Shah. The demands of throwing him away from the power became the only goal that could gather all the separate portions of the Iranian society together. Moreover, as Amir Arjomand illustrates, the Pahlavi monarchy had the same properties as other similar regimes, and it can be an explanation of the rapid rise of Khomeini as an antimonarchist and the alternative of the Shah. From the realpolitik perspective, the American administration was worried about an eventual transition of power in Iran at least since 1977. "Because Iran's political structure is, in effect, the projection of one man, the provision for a smooth transfer of power is Iran's crucial long-range problem" (Byrne 2005, p. 48).

The whole story of the crisis in 1978, later led to a revolution, started with a published article in the semi-official paper *Ettela'at*, which resulted in a domino of uprisings one after another. The article named was entitled "Iran and Red and Black Colonization" and signed with a pseudonym. It connected the "black reaction" of ulama against the White Revolution to the then situation of Khomeini aimed to restore his political activity. The article described Khomeini as "an adventurer, without faith, and tied to the centers of colonialism ... a man with a dubious past, tied to the more superficial and reactionary colonialists" (Keddie and Richard 2006, p. 225). Moreover, it claimed that the ancestral root of Khomeini is Indian, and he signed his love poems in youth time as *Hindi*. The purpose was to discredit Khomeini by representing him as a fraud religious man who receives British support to continue his fight against the Shah. Regardless of the embodied desired anti-British conspiracy theories of the Shah in the article, the seemingly Shah-ordered assault on Khomeini was a miscalculation, and the inflammatory clerical reaction in Qom proved it. "Demonstrations with casualties ensued. Thereafter, on the traditional forty-day mourning intervals, demonstrations recurred, and religious, liberal, and leftist forces gradually coalesced against the regime" (Keddie 1983, p. 589). However, to overthrow a political system, it needs all the different social discontent, regardless of the intensity and social classes, to converge together as a united revolutionary power. The way that the Iranian last monarchy collapsed is itself a kind of ironic moment of Middle East history. During only one year, from 7 January 1978 till 11 February 1979, all the achievements of more than seventy years disappeared and the first powerful army of the region refused its constitutional obligation to keep back of the Prime Minister, Shapour Bakhtiar (1914–1991), and accepted the leadership of Khomeini by announcing "neutrality" in the critical time of revolutionary triumph or defeat.

Khomeini knew that the army is the last fort to prevent his revolution from coming true. Therefore, at the first speech in Tehran, after almost fifteen years of

exile, he addressed the army with anti-imperialist discourse and in rhetoric waved with both mercy and wrath, inviting them to join revolutionaries (or "nation" in his terms) and warning commanders and generals to stay in the position of being a servant to foreign powers and especially America (Moin 2000, p. 156). Ironically, the controversial foreign power at that time was trying to convince the army for a so-called peaceful political transition. The combination of an indecisive Prime Minister with an uncertain army made the whole monarchic body in the most vulnerable position of its time. In the Pahlavi monarchy, as McLauchlin (2010) indicates, the military body was founded mostly on personal interests rather than "a corporate military interest" (p. 344). The fragmentation of the military and the peculiar interaction of the Shah with the royal army, all resulted in the atomized military body. Moreover, McLauchlin reminds us that the sense of insecurity between military officers drove them to the conclusion "that even loyalty was no guarantee of protection. It became much more attractive to defect to the opposition or flee Iran" (p. 344). The Shah formed a military army that was thoroughly dependent on himself and "had put rival officers and even mutual enemies into senior positions in the armed forces, in order to reduce the chance of their combining against him and plotting a coup" (Axworthy 2013, p. 6). However, the same strategy made the royal army impotent and unable to act in the absence of the Shah. Rashidian traces the mentioned royal policy toward army forces into the ancient absolutist characteristics of Iranian monarchy, or that is to say Oriental despotism. The monarchy is prone to dominate all realms and own all spheres. According to Rashidian (1978), it remained the same during the Islamic era. He refers to the political teachings of Nizam al-Mulk (1018–1092)³² who advises monarchs to paralyze the army by appointing antagonist officers in the military body in order to prevent their conspiracies against the monarch (p. 159).

There is a continuous debate on the causes of failing the military to prevent the domino of demonstrations and control the crisis to not going in the revolutionary direction. The armed forces had a great and decisive role from the very beginning of Pahlavi till the end of it. The historical military decision was the final chapter of the more than 2500 years of the monarchic system, which came at 2 pm 11 February. The Supreme Military Council "decided unanimously to declare itself neutral in the current political disputes ... in order to prevent further disorder and bloodshed" (Moin 2000, p. 159). Accordingly, all military personnel was ordered to step back, not intervene anymore and come back or remain in their bases.

³² Nizam al-Mulk was a scholar and *vizier* of the Seljuq Empire. He became was the *de facto* ruler of the empire for twenty years after the assassination of Alp Arslan in 1072.

The mentioned military decision gave the irreversible momentum of victory to the broad anti-Shah coalition and dedicated the control of the whole country to Khomeini and his followers. The then prime minister Shapour Bakhtiar expressed his assertive plan to stop the crisis and gave details of his conversation with General Abbas Gharabaghi.³³

I had an appointment with Mr. Qarabaghi. I had given them a plan to carry out. This plan indicated that the marshal law troops should strictly enforce the curfew regulations and immediately arrest anyone failing to obey it. I wanted them to be heavy-handed and avoid the softly-softly approach. The plan was approved by the National Security Council. ... I became suspicious as to why he had not turned up. I telephoned his office several times, and each time I was told that he was in a very important meeting ... Qarabaghi telephoned at ten thirty. It was Sunday morning 22nd Bahman. I asked him: 'General, what happened? Where were you?' He replied: 'Your Excellency. Prime Minister, the army has just now declared its neutrality.' As soon as I heard that, I went to a different world. I told him: 'Neutrality between who and who? Is it neutrality between law and anarchy? Is it neutrality between Iran and Iran's enemies? How come I failed to predict such a thing? Thank you, General. thank you very much.' I then put the phone down. (Shahpour Bakhtiar n.d.)

Briefly, the roots of military defectiveness and neutrality in the time of turmoil have been referred to the following factors: the very over-hierarchical structure of the military, the highest degree of dependency on the Shah, and also on the American military advisors have been mentioned. The very historical background of the Pahlavi monarchy weaves with military elements, armed forces, and the presence of a kind of national loyalty to the political power in the form of the minister of war or the commander-in-chief. The early period of Pahlavi history is coined by Reza Khan's crucial step to seize the political power at the end of Qajars when he was serving in the cabinet of Sayyid Ziya al-Dīn Tabataba'ī. In other words, the founder of the Pahlavi monarchy, himself, was a well-known and honorable Commander of the Iranian Army, which subsequently combined with the post of Minister of War and Reza Khan hold both official strategic positions. He took the title of *Sardār Sepah* or Commander-in-Chief of the Army, by which he was known until he founded his own monarchic succession. The last Shah of Iran was also Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian armed forces in most of his reign, except the short time of the second premiership of popular³⁴ politician Mohammad Mosaddeq from 22 July 1952 till 19 August 1953.

³³ Abbas Gharabaghi (1918–2000) was the last chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces and the deputy commander-in-chief of the Iranian Imperial Army in 1978–79.

³⁴ There is a narrow border between being popular and being populist. It seems Mosaddeq was more popular in the early period of his premiership and became populist without

Returning to the last days of the Imperial Iranian army, there was less chance for the army to act effectively after 16 January 1979, which was the symbolic end of the Pahlavi monarchy before the victory of revolutionaries; the day of leaving Iran. The army became like a body without a head when the Shah left the political scene. McLauchlin (2010) suggests finding the roots of the military backwardness in the strategy of the Shah to form his own praetorian regime. Regardless of assessing the accuracy of categorizing the Pahlavi monarchy under praetorianism,³⁵ McLauchlin indicates some neglected facts about the structure of loyalty in the royal army of Iran. All of the praetorian states had a fear of military conspiracies, and it is peculiar to the Shah due to the relative influence of the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party in the military army during those decades. From a different standpoint, McLauchlin notes in his comparative analysis the importance of recruiting ethnicities in the senior ranks of the military. The significance of ethnic role lies in the strategic context to form a system of loyalty between militaries, which has roots in the populace of various provinces in the country. Probably, the unification policy of Pahlavi and its alleged ideological emphasis on Persian nationalism deprived the state of gaining the support of ethnic groups in the last crisis.

The Shah's military policy had rested very strongly on monitoring and distributing gains ... Various aspects of military policy needed to be personally approved by the Shah ... no general stationed outside the capital could enter without his express permission ... the heads of each service were kept separate, each individually reporting to the Shah alone ... Numerous security and intelligence services, run in parallel, were specially tasked with monitoring each other. For example, while SAVAK was the most notorious secret police force, a unit called the Special Bureau was assigned to monitor SAVAK ... No clear ethnic selection was employed; Fred Halliday, noting that no figures existed on the ethnic composition of the military. (McLauchlin 2010, p. 344)

During 1978–79, the probability of a military coup was not only the concern of the Carter administration or the anti-Shah coalition. It was also an instrument in the discourse of Bakhtiar to gather the support of the opposition and weaken the status of a strong coalition formed around the character of Khomeini. He warned at the very first speeches as the new premier that if his efforts going to fail, then there is no alternative except a brutal military coup (Abrahamian 1982). The opposition to the Shah had an almost harsh reaction against Shapour

the support of the population in his late years. In fact, Mosaddeq is a disputable figure in contemporary Iranian history and his character is being polarized by his advocates and his opponents. In this regard, his character is similar to the Shah.

³⁵ Praetorianism refers to the excessive political influence of the Armed Forces in a country.

Bakhtiar as the new prime minister. Only the so-called moderate religious leaders like Shari'atmadari with a sound of hesitation supported him. Even his political colleagues in the National Front expelled him from the party. The so-called chauvinistic and patriotic party exactly repeated the demand of Khomeini that there is no peace until the abdication of Shah. At the same time, Khomeini fueled the demonstration by using his own charismatic and religious authority. He claims that any government which took place by order of the Shah is illegal and made the acceptance of Bakhtiar equal to obedience to his master, Shah, as a satanic political power or tyrant in the Islamic terminology. On the 6 January 1979, "Calling obedience to the new government 'obedience to Satan,' Ayatollah Khomeini urged the civil service employees to refuse to obey the new ministers and to bar their entrance to ministry buildings" (Nikazmerad 1980, p. 344).

The plan which had been drawn by anti-Shah opposition to disable the military was partly rhetorical and also diplomatic. They used both "hard" and "soft" approaches against the military forces; giving flowers to them as a sign of conciliation if they join revolutionaries and promising the inevitable punishment if they remain loyal to the orders (Eisenstadt 2011). In their rhetoric, even all the communist and "secular" oppositions preferred to use the religious charisma of Ayatollah Khomeini as an instrument of frightening soldiers and junior officers from any resistance against protesters. The armed forces, themselves, "despite their large numbers and ultrasophisticated weapons, were traumatized by having to go out into the streets day in and day out to shoot down unarmed fellow citizens shouting religious slogans" (Abrahamian 1982, p. 526). Therefore, the royal army which founded to defend the country under the name of the Shah was being surrounded by religious symbols which had been instrumentalized in order to demolish the last barrier in front of the revolution and to force them to hand the country over revolutionaries. Related to the religious foundation of the Iranian monarchy and the ancient concept of "divine royal glory," the Shiite clerical establishment decided to stand behind Khomeini and take the divinity from the then monarch. The soldiers took their side on the disconnected religious power from the monarchy, and it resulted in the breakdown of the mere secular and pro-Western monarchy, which had to lose already its religious standpoint by being demonized during 1978–9.

In the short time of his premiership, Shapour Bakhtiar had a wise and assertive political plan to weaken the religious charisma of Khomeini based on his honest and secular argument that Ruhollah Khomeini cannot use his clerical immunity and simultaneously expand his political activity, which can be summarized in institutionalized terror and propaganda against the government. The later analysis was the answer of Bakhtiar to the Shah. After the Shah appointed him as the

prime minister, he asked Bakhtiar: "What do you want to do with this man, i.e., Khomeini?" and the delivered answer was an opinion which the subsequent plan derived from it (Shapour Bakhtiar 2006, p. 107). Bakhtiar wanted to bring Khomeini back from heaven and his sacred place into the dust of the political ground, far from his spiritual shelter which made him infallible and beyond any critique. According to Bakhtiar, he sent a request for an official meeting with Khomeini through two of his main representatives, i.e., Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti (1928–1981)³⁶ and Bazargan.

Let me summarize that we came to the conclusion that Khomeini would either say yes or not. If he were to agree to sit and talk to me, he would lose half of his charisma [spiritual appeal]. And should he refuse to see me, then we would tell the Iranian people: 'Look what sort of a man he is; we are offering to see him and he is not prepared to discuss anything. This fellow does not understand anything. (Shahpour Bakhtiar n.d.)

Unlikely to be expected, Khomeini and his office responded positively and then accepted the suggestion of the Shah's prime minister. It means that Bakhtiar made a successful agreement to meet the revolutionary leader personally in Paris. However, the agreed meeting was getting canceled shortly after the approval of Khomeini. Who convinced him to change his mind? Bakhtiar named the responsible figures clearly in his published memories; Abolhassan Banisadr (1933–)³⁷, Karim Sanjabi, and Daryush Forouhar (1928–1998).³⁸ Banisadr confronted the deal because of his political estimation that the meeting will empower Bakhtiar to cease the speed of revolutionary incident and to eventually stop it and to pass the turmoil (Shapour Bakhtiar 2006, p. 111).

³⁶ Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti was a jurist, politician, member of Khomeini's inner circle, founder of the Society of Militant Clergy, and one of the main architects of the political structure of Iran after the revolution. His role was prominent to clericalize the new constitution and the administrative body after 1979. Beheshti was assassinated along with more than 70 members of the Islamic Republic Party on 28 June 1981.

³⁷ Sayyid Abolhassan Banisadr was the first President of the Islamic Republic from 4 February 1980 until he was impeached by the Islamic Assembly on 20 June 1981. Prior to his presidency, he was the temporal head of the Ministry of Commerce in the interim government of Mehdi Bazargan after the Islamic Revolution.

³⁸ Daryush Forouhar was an Iranian politician and the leader of the Nation Party of Iran. He and his wife, Parvaneh Forouhar, were brutally murdered by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence in their house. The murder belonged to the chain murders of Iran; a series of 1988–98 murders and disappearances of certain Iranian dissidents.

The shah is far from abdication. It seems clear that he is planning to leave as part of a plan devised by Bakhtiar to restore order in the country, wracked by a year of anti-shah violence, and at the same time salvage the monarchy. The objective is to have the shah leave Iran for an extended period while the new government cools passions and ends the chaos, then return as a constitutional monarch with limited powers. (Lippman 1979, para. 4)

Sanjabi and Forouhar were against the deal because of their hostility to him in accord with “the politics of envy,” which they pursued after Bakhtiar accepted the Shah’s invitation to form the cabinet. Their reaction to Bakhtiar in his short premiership was an obvious symptom of *ressentiment* which arouses self-mistrust and mistrust to the other (Fassin 2013). They became pessimistic about Bakhtiar, for they had already lost their self-optimism. That is why the friends of Shapour Bakhtiar became his antagonists due to their envious consideration “we failed to reach the power, so must he to be faced with the same failure.” Later, they expressed their best possible self in the worst gestalt; self-subordination to Khomeini. In general, the National movement had been split in 1979 between two opposite approaches: *transplacement* or reform and *replacement* or revolution (Chehabi 2013, p. 32). In that time, as Lippman (1979) reports, the National Front announce the day which Bakhtiar represented his new civilian cabinet as “the day of national mourning.” The message of the mentioned announcement was evident enough; we will fight you, even with the cost of delivering the whole land to the hand of Khomeini. He even nailed his leadership by dividing the demonstrations. “Khomeini called for a separate, religiously inspired day of mourning Monday, a day after that called by the National Front” (Lippman 1979, para. 19). The last similar controversial demonstration of the National Front was in 1962. As an indication to a brick in the great wall of questions from the anti-Shah opposition, it seems still an envious act of the National Front to demonstrate against the Shah and the White Revolution (Milani 2012) under the premiership of Ali Amini who was considered in general as a politician connected to the Mosaddeq’s heritage. He is the man who told the Shah, in the private meeting of proposing the premiership to him, that Mosaddeq was not against the Shah and told His Majesty a sentence uttered by Mosaddeq about the Shah which proves his trust and confidence to His Majesty; “the Shah is a generous man in his relation to me” (Amini 1981, p. 61). In this matter, the mentioned planned rally by the National Front can be considered, from an impartial spectator, as an unwritten coalition with the similar objection uttered by Ruhollah Khomeini against Ali Amini, the Shah, and the White Revolution. Khomeini as a Shiite clergy had a plus disagreement of women’s right to vote, and the National Front served *de facto* his fanatic motive.

Both the National Front and Ruhollah Khomeini boycotted the "national referendum" on 26 January 1963. Khomeini accused the Pahlavi monarchy of assaulting Islam and its traditional heritage. "The son of Reza Khan has embarked on the destruction of Islam in Iran ... I will oppose this as long as the blood circulates in my veins" (Cooper 2016, p. 112). It is not the debate of the right to demonstrate or criticize the process of a referendum which all are indisputable (Daniel 2012, p. 157), but the issue is to prudently consider the fragile position of the Shah to proceed the modernization when the Islamic-Marxist coalition was the start to loom on the horizon of the Iranian politics. It is worth mentioning that Khalil Maleki reminds Mosaddeq in his letter that the Shah had only two demands from the National Front after 1953 in order to conciliate the broken ties between him and Mosaddeqists; declaring the adherence to the constitution and clarifying the distance with the Tudeh Party. The Shah sought that the third issue is a consensus and there is no disagreement on it; the economic progression and developing Iran, which is the prerequisite for its independence (K. Maleki 1989, p. 431). In this sense, the White Revolution could be considered as a revolutionary and constructive change in the socio-economic foundations of Iran. The six-point of White Revolution includes agrarian reform, forest nationalization, the sale of public sector factories to pay compensation to agricultural landlords, votes for women, profit-sharing in industry and the eradication of illiteracy (Hiro 2013, p. 232). However, the National Front became more radicalized after 1953, and they justified the confrontation with Ali Amini as opposing "repressive tolerance" of his promised changes (Milani 2012, p. 199). Nevertheless, as Hiro reminds us, the result of the referendum of January 1963 as it officially declared that "99.9 percent 'Yes' vote" is a symptom of autocratic tendency to represent the support of not even majority of Iranians, but almost all of the inhabitants in Iran.

Khomeini took the opportunity of Ramadan to fortify the intensity of the crisis. He issued a *fatwa* to devalue the Pahlavi monarchy as *Tāqut*, which "was the moral equivalent of a declaration of war against the state" (Cooper 2016, p. 349). On the 3 November 1978, Sanjabi was supposed to visit Khomeini in Paris to negotiate on the then crisis, but Khomeini wanted mere obedience and had no interest to hear any other opinion except overthrowing the Pahlavi monarchy. That is why Sanjabi went to the residency of Ayatollah by presenting his own political position as a defender of the constitutional demands and left the house by joining the revolutionary camp of Ayatollah. Sanjabi ceased to resist the desired result of Khomeini. The reversed and unexpected outcome of the meeting was announced on 6 November.

Dr. Sanjabi met with Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris and joined forces with the ayatollah's movement. Khomeini warned that he would expel from the movement anyone who negotiated with the shah. ... In a joint statement issued in Paris, Ayatollah Khomeini and Dr. Sanjabi ruled out any cooperation with the regime and demanded a popular referendum on the monarchy. This was a reversal of a previously held position by Dr. Sanjabi, who had sought a genuine parliamentary process within the framework of a constitutional monarchy. Khomeini called for the formation of a new "Islamic Republic" based on "Islamic criteria." (Nikazmerad 1980, pp. 337, 338)

Related to the main theme of the inquiry, without reforming the religious mentality through a social and intellectual movement that can form a mutual reciprocal influence with the political realm, there remains no choice except to resist in front of religious radicalism decisively. Accordingly, the government's resistance to the religious revolution must be accompanied by the highest degree of loyalty to the conservation of the then body politic and without any hesitation in the domestic policy to stop planned violence and extensive vandalism. That was the situation of Shapour Bakhtiar as the last prime minister of the Ancien Régime. Nevertheless, the Shah was too hesitant to confront Khomeini, and Bakhtiar was too liberal to do that. In his memoirs, Bakhtiar accepts that confronting the crisis with his democratic criterion was inconsistent in comparison to the reality of chaotic Iran in 1978–9. He wrote that his estimation of the then circumstances was based on the logic of liberal values, while the whole situation was beyond any logic (Shapour Bakhtiar 2006, p. 122). Moreover, the revolutionary leader and the anti-Shah opposition did not believe in any restriction to achieve his goal. The mixture of Shah's hesitation and Bakhtiar's democratization paved the way for the breakdown of the entire system and facilitated the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The evaluation of the government about the political capacity of Shiite radicalism underestimated its actual status and was far from reality.

It is worth mentioning that the delay in reforming religion ended the situation with the impossible expectation from a Shah or a prime minister to be a reformer in both religious and bureaucratic areas. The Shah had a favorable view about the very Shiism in itself, though he attributed "corruption" to Shiite clergies who took all judiciary under their control on the eve of the emergence of the Pahlavi monarchy (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 24). He made the political confrontation against the radicalism of Khomeini, but he could not predict the abrupt coalition of traditional clerics with Khomeini and forming the socio-political network between many mosques and religious centers all around the country. Bakhtiar was well aware of the danger of clerical establishment, but he confined himself strictly to the democratic values, while his opponents allowed to use any instrument, even

the life of hundreds in Cinema Rex, to meet their political ambitions. Some scholars like Mozaffari consider the torching of Cinema Rex by pro-Khomeinists as the first blind terror in the history of the Middle East (Beaucon 2014). It was evident from the beginning of January 1978 that the strong Islamist mentality of Khomeini inherently motivates the ongoing uprising. The whole so-called secular and patriotic opposition to the Shah found no chance for themselves to gain the attention of the public opinion in that time, as Khomeini seemed to place already in a high position of public acceptance.

The Shah was able to retain power for some thirty-seven years in part because he succeeded in preventing the forces opposed to him from becoming united. The shah was overthrown when his heterogeneous opponents, many of whom were entirely averse to establishing an Islamic theocracy in Iran, wholeheartedly submitted to the charismatic leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini in order to overthrow the monarchy. As with Lenin, the accidental presence of Khomeini on the historical scene was arguably indispensable to the Iranian revolution. None of the secular opposition leaders or anti regime clerics could even remotely approximate Khomeini in terms of charismatic and popular appeal. (D. Zahedi 2001, p. 30)

Khomeini used religious terms to demonize the Shah, and "secular" opposition accepted his fundamental Islamist discourse to demonize the monarchy. Khomeini had started many months before when he was in France, to spread and actualize his political theology and all of his peculiar followers were trying to import his radical Shiite rhetoric into the Iranian political atmosphere. The left and so-called patriotic opposition, i.e., the National Front and religiously-oriented Freedom Movement of Iran, made a historic gamble to support him in order to overthrow the common enemy. They were observing all of the clear fundamentalist evidence in uprisings and the warning signals in the speeches and interviews of Khomeini as an only instrument to achieve their political purpose. Their estimation showed no chance to defeat the Shah without the presence of Khomeini in the center of the unleashed political discontent. They put all of their heritage as a political force with Modern gestures into a perennial risk, and after many decades they are still in a denial mood of accepting their wrong historic choice based on wrong ideological dogmata. Their negligence is rooted in confusion between demanding freedom and making a *free government*.

To make a government requires no great prudence. Settle the seat of power; teach obedience: and the work is done. To give freedom is still more easy. It is not necessary to guide; it only requires to let go the rein. But to form a *free government*; that is, to temper together these opposite elements of liberty and restraint in one consistent

work, requires much thought, deep reflection, a sagacious, powerful, and combining mind. (Burke 2003, p. 208)

The over self-confidence of “secular” opposition was one key fact for deeming Khomeini a fool. They wanted to make Khomeini fool and use it instrumentally to overthrow the Shah and then kick Khomeini out of the political scene. Ironically, the prediction of the so-called secular opposition was thoroughly against the realpolitik and the character of Khomeini. Reversely, Khomeini deceived them, instead of those to deceive Khomeini; the clever Mullah used all the heritage of the Iranian left to establish an oppressive theocracy in place of a semi-liberal monarchy. Moreover, all the classical oppositions of the Pahlavi monarchy underestimated the weight of religious identity in Iran, which Khomeini mobilized it into his own desired Shiite ideology. The 37 days of Shapour Bakhtiar as the last prime minister (4 January 1979–11 February 1979) was also the last chance of mentioned political heritage to prove the authenticity of their long decades claim of justice, liberty and equality. However, their historical failure depended mostly on the ideological perception of mentioned precious concepts theoretically and also on their full-bodied sense of hatred against the Shah. Ahi, the unofficial mediator between the Shah and the Carter administration during the crisis, indicates the mentioned wrong estimation of the anti-Shah opposition and reminds that they were ignorant about the charismatic power of Ayatollah Khomeini. In this regard, Ahi reminds us that “The charismatic power is impossible to be divided, to be granted (*tafviz*) and to be lawful” (KEYHAN.LONDON ONLINE 2019).

Eventually, it is vital to assess the popular Iranian conspiracy theory on American support of the revolutionary process of 1979. As Ahi points out, the Carter administration has its hesitant policy and inner conflictions between the National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and the Secretary State Cyrus Vance in the matter of backing the Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar (BBC Persian 2019a). However, the official documents prove that the United States had supported the government as far as the collapse had not proven itself as an inevitable fate of the monarchy. The American analysis in 1978³⁹ predicted the future of Iran under of the four categories: 1) a new Pahlavis era which would form by the Regency Council 2) a civilian government 3) a military coup 4) anarchy. In every case, Americans presumed that Iran would enter into an era of weakness with all the possible scenarios, and the autocratic stability during 1953–1978 is not likely to restore at least in a short-term. The installation of a military dictatorship

³⁹ The report of George W. Ball with the title “Issues and Implications of the Iranian Crisis”.

would be suppressive in the short-term and disruptive in the long-term. Moreover, they made no differentiation between pro-Khomeinists and the fourth scenario as anarchy. The Americans aimed intentionally and purposely to give the feeling of insecurity to the Shah, due to their prediction that his personality is unlikely to accept constitutional limitations as far as he feels the full and unconditional support of the United States. They expected that the Shah could pass the crisis and they waited to the last minutes for his probable success. Eventually, Americans later became sure that Iran is on the eve of disruption because of an exhausted monarch and a powerful clergy "who has come to personify the revolt" and was considered by Iranians as an "almost sacred figure, whose actions are beyond reproach." In this situation, they started to make a distinction between the probable victory of Khomeini and the worst possible scenario named anarchy and chaos after the Shah. They had a fear that the post-Shah period "could lead to Balkanization and pave the way for increased Soviet influence." Even when the Carter Administration made a decision to contact Khomeini and his entourage in France, they asserted that "to limit the extent to which he and the shadowy group around him are permitted to manage events in Iran" (Byrne 2005, pp. 224–235). No need to say that the most failure of Americans in their policy was to invest in Khomeini's promises and being deceived by the Ayatollah. The negligence of the United States lied to trivialize his anti-Americanism as "an essential part of Khomeini's *Weltanschauung*" (Simpson 2017, p. 235) with precedence of his confrontation with the Shah in 1963 and his fanatic hostility toward the Pahlavi monarchy mainly due to its constructive relationship with the USA. In the end, such declassified documents demonstrate that the Iranian conspiracy theories on the role of the United States in the downfall of the monarchy are not coherent. It is a part of xenophobic sensations like anti-Arab feelings. As Keddie reminds us, "they are even more closely tied with modern nationalism, however. A desire to find a non-insulting 'secret' of decline plus the modern emphasis on national unity and independence has led many Asian peoples to blame their troubles on foreign conquest" (Keddie 1962, p. 287).

3.3.3 The Image of Shah: The Attribution of Paradoxical Characteristics

There are many pseudo-psychological analyses about the very character and characteristics of the Shah. In fact, the Shah is being introduced and analyzed in opposite ways. He received paradoxical explanations like being hesitant, revolutionary, conservative, apolitical, Inactive, etc. The fact that every human being

is a mixture of antagonist properties does not justify the inconsistent presentation of a historical figure in favor of the ideology of presenters. One of the main claims about his behavior as a ruler is that the Shah felt to be strong in the time of victory and felt to be weak in the time of crisis. In general, the mentioned so-called pathology of the Shah is the normal reaction of human beings, regardless of their own peculiar personality. The alleged hesitation to him is also inclusive, which covers a general pattern of many people being hesitant in hard times. The same public idea about him made a sharp contrast between a hesitant son and a decisive father, by mentioning some real or fictional story about the seriousness of Reza Shah and putting a similar story with opposite contents about his son. The conclusion portrays the powerful and strong personality of the father against the impotent and feeble personality of the Shah. The same antagonist approach comes into the public assessment of his decision not to confront the demonstrations in 1978; some Iranians attributed him the lack of courage and unmanliness and others transcend his decision to the moral virtues of the king and his sincere belief in human rights and dignity. Ironically, there can be recognized many Iranians as traditional royalists who sharply criticized the Shah for his almost peaceful confrontation in the time of a violent revolution and also his decision to leave the country at the end.

The despotic culture made a decisive line between the father and the son; the powerful Reza Shah vs. the weak Mohammad Reza Shah. The demand of being oppressed in 1979 by the current old and regretful revolutionaries is also a tendency to make oneself subdued by power. In this regard, the Shiite ideology became the primary source of inspiration for the massive discontent that led to a revolt against the Shah. It seems that the Pahlavi monarchy had a dual role; to control the clerical establishment and to let it extend its religious networks. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the Shah's autocracy was the only barrier in front of the Marxist-Islamist coalition. The blame is articulated in the form of guaranteeing the then secular policy by making it democratic, which the Shah started and the Marxist-Islamist coalition took advantage of it in order to smash the Pahlavi monarchy as the only barrier to actualizing their ideologies.

Referring to the various and comprehensive aspects of conservative policy, let us not forget that prudence is just one side of the coin, and decisiveness is another side in the issue of conservative philosophy. Moreover, prudence does not mean letting the fear prevail over rationality. Montesquieu (1689–1755) reminds us that “The will of the sovereign is the sovereign himself” (Strauss 1966, p. 30). It is rational to pay attention to fear and its causes, but it is irrational to be fearful and indecisiveness. There are lots of explanations and guesses on the reason for leaving Iran by the Shah on 16 January 1979. The cancer is always part of the

explanation with the first symptoms in the autumn of 1973. It is being researched that "he could have lived longer and perhaps even played a role in the future of Iran" if he had been treated under good medical practice (Khoshnood and Khoshnood 2016). The American documents, on 19 January 1977, are clear on the estimation of the Carter Administration about the future of Iran before the emergence of the crisis.

Iran is likely to remain stable under the Shah's leadership over the next several years ... the prospects are good that Iran will have relatively clear sailing until at least the mid-1980s when oil production will probably slow and when the Shah says he will step aside in favor of the Crown Prince. (Byrne 2005, p. 43)

Ironically, the Shah received both moral praises not brutally to confront his revolutionized nation and political blame for his weakness to save the country. His indecisiveness becomes the subject of both virtue and vice. "For the Shah, character was destiny, and many of his weaknesses as a leader were his virtues as a human being" (Milani 2012, p. 13). However, the Shah used to rule the country in an autocratic way. He could not also form mutual cooperation with any stronger politicians than himself. Maybe "his experience with Mossadegh had soured him on strong prime ministers, and he wanted one who was weak and pliable" (Kinzer 2003, p. 139). However, his habit to direct Iran exclusively under his own name cannot be neglected. Ali Amini, former prime minister, articulated his conversation with the Shah in 1978. According to Amini, the Shah was not even sure about the already promised plan of transitioning the power and asked his former prime minister in a deniable way "Transitioning? Then what about me?" (Amini 1981, p. 96). In these circumstances, Amini had no choice to explain the meaning of the constitutional monarch to the Shah and that his everlasting concern about his power is not aligned with any constitutional system. On December 13–14 1978, the Shah rejected Amini's proposal to establish "an interim regency council pending the formation of a coalition government after parliamentary elections in June" (Nikazmerad 1980, p. 341). The meeting demonstrates the American report on 19 January 1977 that "the Shah, who has become increasingly self-confident over the past decade, will become less amenable to advise from the US or from his domestic counselors" (Byrne 2005, p. 43). When Ali Amini explained the envious emotion of the Shah against most of his prime ministers includes Ahmad Qavam, he added that the very provocation of the Shah against his bureaucrats has no meaning except his weakness. "No powerful and self-confident ruler irritates others or intensifies situation against his own men" (Amini 1981, p. 95).

In those years, the Carter Administration⁴⁰ became obsessive that “Washington does not have a clear perception of the Shah’s long-range objectives” (Byrne 2005, p. 48). In the American documents, the mentioned issue is echoed in many phrases. They wanted to know “further reflections on what is behind the Shah’s words and actions” and how decisions are formed and who is influential in implementing them. On 27 December 1976, Americans believed that they “know quite a bit about his aims and tactics” (Byrne 2005, p. 48). The Shah himself had a significant shift in his political plan of the future. In 1977, the Shah believed that introducing a democratic system will be potentially unstable, and only holding the line against political liberalization is a safe approach for the short-term. According to an American report on 19 January 1977, “Shah has been convinced for a decade that a strong monarchy is the only guarantee of stability and of rapid economic development” (Byrne 2005, p. 48). Conversely, he decided to start the liberalization of politics. On 22 August 1978, Sullivan reported to Secretary Vance and Dr. Brzezinski about a fundamentally political decision of the Shah that was announced in his Constitution Day Speech to transform his authoritarian regime into a genuine democracy.

He has reached this decision as a result of his own intellectual convictions, because he feels Iran has become too complex and too volatile to govern through the current processes of benevolent authoritarianism. He therefore feels that the only way to preserve the integrity of the country is to change political system, even if that change puts the monarchy at risk. Indeed, he realizes that, unless the system changes, the monarchy is predictably doomed. (Byrne 2005, p. 48)

Back to analyze the reason for the departure from the country which the Shah ruled in since 16 September 1941, Ahi indicated the shocking moment for the Shah when he faced with the mass of demonstrators shouted “death to the Shah.” According to Ahi, the Shah was popular between Iranians, and “his people” liked him just a few years before the revolution (BBC Persian 2019a). Homayoun (2009a) indicates the same assessment that before the middle of the 1950s, when the Shah became out of control, the social atmosphere was in his favor and his popularity was evident in his travels in all parts of Iran (p. 48). At that time, Homayoun asserts, the Iranian society sent the message of sympathy to the Shah, which means that the majority of Iranians were willing to accompany the monarch in his plan of development. In other words, the Shah believed that people want his plan of modernization and development. Therefore, he did not expect the

⁴⁰ The report of David H. Blee as “National Intelligence Officer for the Middle East” on 4 November 1976.

then uprisings against himself, and it was a significant cause to bring him to the decision of departure. In the time of leaving the country and in exile, the Shah of Iran was sad, depressed, and full of sorrows due to what Iranians chose in front of his endeavor to bring Iran to a respected international plane.

However, as Adam Smith reminds us, all disagreeable passions like ingratitude may properly be regarded as "necessary parts of the character of human nature." Even the "unsocial passions" can be delusive and misleading, but they are also necessary for the harmony of social well-being and, thus, they are central in every social process practically. In this sense, gratitude and resentment are two sides of normal human behavior (Smith 1976, pp. 34, 35). More importantly, even the appearance of the dark side of human feelings seems proper and approvable when an impartial spectator sympathizes with it (p. 60). The latter point, explains the human roots of international sympathies with the Revolution of 1979 in their reductionist perception to picture the Iranian crisis as the confrontation between the oppressor and the oppressed. The *ressentiment* "may be better understood as 'the emotional apprehension of undeserved advantage,' as a just and reasonable response to unjust circumstance" (Banning 2006, p. 75). The anti-Shah opposition promoted this imagination of unjust monarchical privileges, and even the middle class was partly affected by it. As we discussed in Section 4.3.2, the patriotic uprisings since 2018 by mostly the lower middle class and the lower class have liberal-conservative elements, and it is recognizable in the pro-Pahlavi slogans and the condemnation of anti-Americanism in the Islamic-Marxist ideology. However, the collective perception of Iranians in 1979 was formed under the mentioned ideology, resulting in envy, anger, hatred, resentment, and "ingratitude."

During his exile in Panama, He had been asked about his feeling when people had turned out in the millions in the streets to cheer his departure and the return of Ayatollah Khomeini, whether he thought "what a fickle, ungrateful people!" The Shah's answered by giving an unknown quotation "Ingratitude is the prerogative of the people" (Lancast 2010b). However, His Majesty's answer was uttered with empty eyes, a colorless face, and a regretful voice. "A remark so full of rueful wisdom you would think he had been in vaudeville" ("Unraveling of Iran's mullahs" 2003). With all these considerations, it should be pointed out that the art of a sovereign is to form, direct, and manage the negative emotions in favor of the benevolent body politic. Seemingly, that is the most perceptible deficiency and the defeat of the Shah. Efficient governance can transform public feelings includes love and hate into a cooperative gestalt result for the conservation of the body politic. He could not prevail the oppositional resentment that

became popularized in 1979 in order to pave the way of peaceful transitioning to democracy.

Moreover, it is an intrinsic characteristic of dictatorship to becloud the relationship between rulers and people. "Because of the fear that dictatorship creates, subjects are likely to falsify their preferences about the dictator's rule. Thus it is very difficult to get a sense of how loyal people really are" (McLaughlin 2010, p. 336). In the vague and foggy atmosphere of a despotic political culture, the mutual fear and falsification mislead both the government and the people. In other words, the lack of transparency intensifies the public conspiracy theories about the governors. That is why unpredictability becomes a norm in authoritarian politics.

The gratitude (*Ghadrshenāsi*) can be a continuous mutual interaction between the nation and the state if and only the mutual discontent was already acknowledged within a democratic procedure. Otherwise, the term should be considered as a part of the despotic political culture that expresses itself in the language. In this sense, the precise meaning of "gratitude" is close to the indubitable obedience in front of the political authority which neglects the rights of citizens and the mutual responsibility in every nation-state. Nevertheless, the public sense that the body politic must be preserved as a precious achievement is possible to create only through democratic participation which gives the necessary sense of being vital as a part of the commonwealth. In a democratic atmosphere, gratitude is a result of self-consciousness about rights and responsibilities. Under the Pahlavi monarchy, many educated Iranians were engaged in the process of development without their sense of being involved. The whole modernization was perceived as an elite plan with the support of the West. The gap between the progression and the public sense of the progression came out of the mentioned despotic perception of "gratitude." Homayoun finds the roots of the regressive reaction of intellectuals about Islamization after 1979 in their ignorance of the past. Dominating Iranian women by the obligatory Islamic code of dress was justified as a temporal phase in the sacred struggle against imperialism. Therefore, the anti-Shah mentality which considered the emancipation of women in 1936, along with the freedom of choosing the lifestyle during Mohammad Reza Shah, as a "secular tyranny" and an "unauthentic life", led to justify the Islamization of feminine life after 1979 which was a glaring example of a "religious discrimination." The women, themselves, had remained unaware of the vitality of all their legal and social achievements during Pahlavi time (Homayoun 2009a, p. 29).

It is almost definite that the Shah remained diffident in front of his father, Reza Shah. In fact, the Shah lived his entire life under the heavy presence of his father. Not only the image of Mosaddeq loomed up in front of him after 1953, but also he was suffering from the sense of being inferior in comparison to

Reza Shah at least since 1940. Despite his self-distrust⁴¹ and his envious relation with both Reza Shah and Mosaddeq respectively in the love and hate sensation, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was the most remarkable figure in contemporary Iranian history due to the actualization of fundamental changes directed by the Shah and Pahlavi elites in the Iranian society after 1960. Although, it seems that the Shah never gained sufficient self-confidence to acknowledge himself as such. Maybe some of his pretensions can be apprehended on these considerations. The Shah made a historical line from the Cyrus Cylinder or Cyrus Charte (*Manshūr-e Kūrosh*) in 539 BC till his own White Revolution (*Enqelāb-e Sefid*) in 1963 (M. R. S. Pahlavi 1966, p. 4). The same ground is applicable to his decision to take the ancient title of "Emperor" or "King of Kings" (*Shāhanshāh*), by referring to the ancestral precedence, in the coronation ceremony held in Tehran on the 26 October 1967.

Due to the same reason, he chose a tone of glorification and ascendancy when he indicates the reforms of Reza Shah and immediately coined it as "good but not enough." In this sense, the Shah aims to indicate the historical reforms of his father, which is in its turn incomparable to the unprecedented changes of Iran under his reign after 1941 (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 28). At the last phrase of his memoirs in exile, he mentions a memory of his father when he wants to explain his contradictory term of the "monarchic democracy" (pp. 199, 200). Reza Shah told his son that he wants to deliver him a country with stable institutions and a sustainable body politic which can be proceeded by itself as an autonomous political structure. The first impression of the Shah was to be disappointed due to his guess that his father does not trust his eligibility to run the country. In a conclusion, the Shah reminds us that after the invasion resulted in the Reza Shah's downfall, he perceived that the throne has not transferred in itself and in an autonomous way, refers to the fragile possibility of the Pahlavi monarchy in that time which could not be continued without the exceptional endeavors of Mohammad Ali Foroughi. With all these considerations, he concludes that from the very time of the coronation he aimed to build such an autonomous modern state which never faces the collapse; the integral dream which was directed in a disintegrating way.

⁴¹ Seemingly, as Brands (1991) illustrates, the British and American intelligence personnel considered him as a weak, and indecisive monarch with a lack of leadership (p. 235).

3.4 Beautiful Monarchy and Sublime Theocracy: The Political Aesthetics of Western Attitude Toward Pahlavi and Khomeini

There is a long line of tension between contemporary Iranian history and what we called the Western world. However, there is a particular misunderstanding between the West and the only Western-oriented Monarchy in Iran. It seems that the Pahlavi monarchy was an exception in Iranian history due to its liberal attitude in cultural and social policies. The international relations of the Shah were also managing to keep the stability of Iran and the Middle East without encountering direct conflict with Russia and with the great support of Western allies in the region. Ironically, the Shah and the West were allying with many prejudices about each other. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in one of his most famous interviews attributed “laziness” to the Western countries and accused their democracy of being “inefficient” (AP Archive 2015, 00:06:23–00:06:28). On the other hand, some released official documents, based on a BBC report, show the strong tendency of the Kennedy administration to get rid of the Shah (Fattahi 2016b). The vital remaining and everlasting dilemma of the entire Middle East is to keep both political stability and democratic order all for the purpose of serving citizens. The region is like a pendulum swinging between secular dictatorship and religious populism. The lack of a national self-awareness of the urgent need to secularism, liberal culture, and democratic mechanism of power is still the biggest problem related to the Middle Eastern political culture. Accordingly, the theory which supposed to be explained here is about the political aesthetics of the Western vision on the former monarchic regime and the current theocratic one in terms of discussing their two own iconic figures in Iran; the Shah and Khomeini.

3.4.1 Pahlavi and “Oriental Despotism”

The purpose is to pay attention to the political tradition of the Middle East and its function of being changed internally and naturally toward a liberal and democratic state. The whole desired viewpoint is based on the presumption that the monarchic political system could bring both stability and freedom in Iran. In other words, it is evident that when a researcher wants to justify the preference of monarchy as a more stable and more liberal system based on historical experiences, especially in the Middle East, then many audiences think there will be a theoretical defense of ancient Oriental despotism. As a speculative point, believing in monarchy as a political tradition lays under the Weberian category of “der

Legitimitätsglaube.” Believing in the legitimacy of a particular body politic is one of the descriptive titles within Max Weber’s stratification (Weber 2008, p. 157). Weber indicates that a political system is legitimate when its participants believe it (“Legitimitätsglaube”), or they find its legitimacy as part of their collective faith. He asserted that *belief* is the basic ground of every system of *authority*, and consequently of every kind of *willingness* ready to obey (Weber 1947, p. 382). Weber categorizes different legitimacies under three main sources, using acquiescence to authority and conformity to the need for obeying. In this sense, people may believe in a political system because of its ancient background or as Weber (2008) prefers “eternal yesterday” (tradition), because their deep belief belongs to the rulers (charisma), or because finding its legality as trustful (rationality of the rule of law). The significant point in Weber’s political theory lies in its indication of the central position of “legitimacy” in social and political science. In Weberian philosophy, legitimacy binds with the faith or belief, and the whole category as an explanation of political order proves that the national faith or the collective belief to a particular ruling system generates balances in body politic more than the quest of self-interest or accustomed obey of rules. Weber was also well aware of the differences between believing in a government or validity of it. He differentiates two certain levels of constituting a body politic; actions that may be oriented by the actors to a *belief* (*Vorstellung*) and the probability of the empirically continuous orientation will be called *validity* (*Geltung*). Therefore, the orientation which has been given to the validity of an *order* (*Ordnung*) is not the result of mere the existence of a “legitimate order” or a “uniformity of social action determined by custom or self-interest.” For example, Weber (1947) asserts that the sense of duty could not derive only from the customary behavior or a kind of self-interested orientation (p. 124).⁴²

Although, there is no escape from normative criteria and besides this fact that not every “body politic” can necessarily be legitimate only because its participants believe in obeying, the monarchic system has at least “the conditions of possibility for politics” or “the possibility of being ruled under an arrangement of order, peace, and discourse” (Nitschke 2016, p. 54). Since the reality of freedom is the question of power and authority and the human possibility to reach an assumed level of political perfection, as Nitschke (2017) clarifies the nature of politics, there is no reasonable ground to give a positive point to the anti-Shah opposition only for their unknown and vague demand to be free (p. 278). The

⁴² In this regard, Weber’s theoretical analysis of the sense of duty and the importance of “faith” to form such social sensations is similar to that of Edmund Burke (2003), while Burke also observes the phenomenal entity of “national duty” as the natural outcome of the combination between politics and aesthetics (pp. 74, 75).

tough questions remain unanswered. Freedom from what? Freedom for what? The anti-imperialist opposition to the Shah has remained in a denial position that prevents them to rethink 1979 and their zealous devotion to Khomeini resulted in dedicating the whole land to his Shiite sectarianism. Since Qajar, Abrahamian (1974) illustrates, the theory of Oriental despotism is incapable of explaining Iran, especially due to the inclusionary limitation of the term which is partly confined to the analysis of despotism when the ruler involved in the control of large-scale bureaucracies like Iran during Achaemenid and Sassanid rule. However, “The Qajars, therefore, were despots without the instruments of despotism” (p. 13). Furthermore, related to the term of “Oriental despotism” has thousand years background from Aristotle till now, but it loses the theoretical capacity to explain the problem and cannot describe the situation in order to analyze it and ultimately find a solution as the last step.

The concept of Oriental Despotism has shaped the European interpretation and representation of Asiatic governments and societies for many centuries. Its origins can be found in Aristotelian political philosophy. However, its meaning since then has evolved, not only due to the theoretical approach of different thinkers, but also to Europeans’ experiences in confrontation with the Asiatic world. ... The theoretical force of this concept has vanished nowadays. (Minuti 2012, para. 1)

First of all, there is a known and articulated difference between despotism and absolute monarchy in the history of political philosophy from ancient times until our contemporary era. Although, some great thinkers made a difference based on their prejudices about a nation or people living in a specific area of the world. The clearest example is the distinction made by Aristotle in one of his famous treatises named *Politics*. When he introduces all kinds of political systems, i.e., monarchy, aristocracy, and the state as the three possible forms of ruling, he distinguishes monarchy from tyranny. In his thoughts, all types of political systems have a dark side related to the ideal form of the body politic. For Aristotle, democracy is not the ideal form, due to the difficulty of attaining perfection and virtue of every kind when the number of people, who involve in the government, increases. (Jowett 1855). The same assessment is applied to oligarchy and monarchy. In fact, tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy are the depraved forms of the monarchy, aristocracy, and the state or, as Aristotle specifically named it, constitution, or polity. Therefore, when one person rules in the form of government then it is monarchy; ruling of more than one, but not many, is aristocracy, and when a mass rule for the common good, it is the constitution. Aristotle names all of the mentioned forms of government with pursuing the common interest as the fundamental and ultimate purpose of governing.

The true forms of government, therefore, are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest; but governments which rule with a view to the private interest, whether of the one, or of the few, or of the many, are perversions. For citizens, if they are truly citizens, ought to participate in the advantages of a state. ... Of the above-mentioned forms, the perversions are as follows; ... tyranny is a kind of monarchy which has in view the interest of the monarch only; oligarchy has in view the interest of the wealthy; democracy of the needy; none of them the common good of all. (Jowett 1855, pp. 79, 80)

However, what Aristotle believes in the best constitution is articulated in different ways throughout *Politics*. He has sympathy for both monarchy and constitution. To understand his ideal form of government, it needs to consider also what Aristotle minds about the economic background of every social class, which constitutes one of the mentioned political systems. For example, the main class in an oligarchy is the wealthy and in a democracy is the poor.⁴³ When Aristotle comes back to this theme in Book IV, as Jowett (1855) illustrates, he prefers to indicate that democracy covers the many and the poor, whereas oligarchy includes the few and the wealthy (p. 110). There is a meaningful connection between Aristotle's political philosophy and his theory of justice which is articulated in *Nicomachean Ethics*'s book V. In this chapter; he discusses the different meanings of justice, all kinds of justice and injustice actions, and the relationship between justice, virtue, and law. The issue becomes problematic in Modern times when equality and inequality are connected to slavery as a pre-Modern category. Even when Aristotle discusses his kind of "justice in exchange" or reciprocity justice, which is exchanging things for mutual benefit, he differentiates slavery position from powerful citizens and indicates that sometimes justice is about proportions and properties not only an equal return (p. 88). His views about women's position in society are also challengeable. When Aristotle discusses the characteristics of the natural ruler, he asserts the natural capability of leadership in males contrary to females (p. 24). He is clear that not only children but also women need the supervision of men.⁴⁴ These ideas from the perspective of Modern readers are unacceptable and incapable to be justified. In other words, Aristotle's arguments on the social level of slaves and women seem weak, unjust, and irrational to us. However, as a matter of being aware to prevent ourselves from committing any historical fallacy or a kind of anachronism, it is also not convincing

⁴³ One of the most important utilizations of studying ancient political philosophy is to know and assess the high-minded and noble conception of society.

⁴⁴ Aristotle also quoted from Socrates that the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying. He also indicates a poem that said "Silence is a woman's glory" (Jowett 1855, p. 24).

to assess the ideas of an ancient Greek philosopher by the contemporary and Modern criteria.

As an important conclusion from the mentioned classification, Aristotle believes that true polity should be characterized as a combination of citizens who are not completely wealthy or completely poor. Instead, they could be named as “middle” citizens, and the only kind of mixed constitution based on this social class can represent the polity. Regarding the conservative philosophy, there are no certain and inherent characteristics in any of the Aristotelian categories of governments which make it a conservative form of ruling or revolutionary one in the opposite. Consequently, the monarchy is also not an essential conservative kind of governing. Applying the point in one example, it is not justifiable to attribute an essential conservative potentiality to democracy because it leads by the mass of the people who have a powerful feeling of distaste for any kind of change. On the other side, it is not true to claim the strong existence of revolutionary capacity in oligarchy referring to the ambitious social class which is the constitutive body of oligarchy, and the probable conflict of their interests with other social classes (Jowett 1855, p. IViii).

It is possible to consider Aristotle’s view of different governmental systems and the way he classifies the form of ruling, among the approach known as political naturalism. In this point of view, some nations which are “barbarous” deserve a different kind of government by their nature. Barbarous are tribes of impulse and violence, who have no independent and coherent civilization (Jowett 1855, p. xxvii). Regarding the question about the form of rules in which one person or a group of people can rule over another, he answers by the nature of the ruler and of the subject. The first attention of Aristotle’s considerations to discuss the right of governing and the type of human beings is related to the despotic rule which is symbolized in the example of the relationship between a master and his slaves. As Jowett illustrates, Aristotle sees no potential for ruling and no capability of recognizing the good life, in a political sense, for slaves. In his thoughts, every state exists for the sake of a good life and life merely without considering its quality is not the goal of politics (p. 82). Consequently, they need naturally to be guided in the city-state by a master or a superior leader.

In Aristotle’s perspective, the power of the despot resembles the decisive influence of a master over his servants. He differentiates monarchy from tyranny because tranny means ruling over people who are not willing to obey and therefore is illegitimate. On the contrary, despotism is governing people who are, intentionally or unintentionally, accepted to be subjected to a forceful political power. Despotism, in this sense, cannot attribute to be illegitimate or absolute.

The resemblance of the monarchic form of despotism with tyranny is not substantial and is considered as a similar way of exercising political power with different foundations. Aristotle argues on the fundamental difference of despotic monarchy in comparison to tyrannical systems, due to some characteristics like legitimacy and hereditary of monarchy generally. With all these considerations, whether Aristotle sees a kind of legitimacy in the monarchic despotism because of his presumptions about the inferiority of its subjects, in comparison with the superiority of Greeks, it is undeniable that monarchy had been observed as a specific and different type of governing which is not essentially undemocratic (although it could be and at least in its ancient history, the monarchy was mostly an absolute political system). The contemporary studies sometimes categorize *undemocratic regimes* under the general title of *authoritarian regimes* which shows a wide range of conceptual spectrum like;

Mostly civilian one-party states, ranging from a highly institutionalized authoritarian regime such as Franco's Spain to the ephemeral single-party regimes of Africa in the very early days of independence; nonhierarchical or hierarchical military regimes like the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes of the Southern Cone of South America; or even royal dictatorships like those in the Balkans in the interwar years (as opposed to traditionally legitimated monarchies). (Chehabi and Linz 1998, p. 3)

The term "Oriental despotism" has changed in contents and connotations after Aristotle till now. To explain the distinction between the nature of the government and laws, Montesquieu indicates that "laws must be democratic if they are to sustain a democracy, or they must be monarchic if they are to sustain a monarchy" (Strauss 1966, p. 29). Strauss illustrates that the mentioned claim is true of political laws, i.e., monarchic laws of succession in the royal family and democratic laws of participation in voting (pp. 29, 30). As Strauss articulates, Montesquieu restores a balance to Aristotle's blueprint of regimes by changing the preponderance of republican regimes to monarchies. After 1748, the world was ruled overall by monarchies; monarchies were everywhere. On the contrary, republics were only in Greece, Rome, a few in Italy, and some German towns. That is why Montesquieu emphasizes monarchies by making two of the three monarchies (i.e., monarchy and despotism) and by subordinating democracy and oligarchy to one thing (i.e., republic). "He frees Aristotle's scheme from its 'provincialism' ... Aristotle looks at matters from a very provincial, Greek point of view. Montesquieu restores the balance" (p. 30). Montesquieu also changes the Aristotelian consideration of the fundamental phenomenon of regimes; they are explained by their postulated causes, not by the purpose they serve (*telos*).

Consequently, democracy is not being defined as a regime dedicated to freedom, for “the end is replaced in Montesquieu by what he calls the principle, i.e., the efficient cause” (p. 30). However, the shift to outweigh monarchies in the categorization of regimes does not necessarily make Montesquieu a monarchist. According to Montesquieu, the people elect by choice better men than the monarch does. However, the democracy which Montesquieu prefers is a *qualified democracy*. Strauss asserts that Montesquieu is a philosopher, not an orator, and his rejection of despotism is based on a political reason.

In a despotic government you have an exorbitant power in the hands of the despot. And why not despotism? Why limited power, either in a monarchy or a republic? ... He uses a more political term: to prevent oppression of the people. That is a consideration which goes through—oppression of the people is bad. And if one would go to the ultimate reason, it would be that the right to self-preservation belongs equally to each and therefore it must be respected in each case. (Strauss 1966, p. 32)

Montesquieu (2009) made a difference not only between monarchy and tyranny but also between monarchy and the very despotism. He believed that in a monarchy, absolute power is exercised by a single person as the monarch based on the firmed and established laws. However, despotism is ruling by a personal will, and a despot decides only by his or her own preferences (p. 214). In other words, despotism is a kind of arbitrary power, and monarchy is not. It is assumable that Montesquieu saw the worst kind of monarchy, which is absolute and authoritative, still stands on the least necessary laws to prevent a political system goes to the tyrannical plane. Ironically, one⁴⁵ of the three most important sources which Montesquieu⁴⁶ used to perceive the Persian political culture, describes in the most radical kind what Jean Chardin (1643–1713)⁴⁷ recognizes as the worst monarchy

⁴⁵ *Voyages de Monsieur le chevalier Chardin, en Perse, et autres lieux de l'Orient* (Amsterdam, 1711).

⁴⁶ Montesquieu born in the time which Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) reigned in Iran and died almost twenty years after the fall of Safavid.

⁴⁷ Chardin's life lays exactly and thoroughly in the ruling period of the Safavid dynasty in Iran. Chardin was born in Paris. His father was an affluent merchant. He followed his father's business. He visited Persia in 1666. It was the same year that Shah Abbas II made Chardin his assignee to purchase jewels. He left Persia in the midst of 1667 to visit India and returned in 1669. The first publishing of his story and his opinions about the situation in Persia was in Paris, 1671. The book entitled 'Le Couronnement de Soleiman Troisième,' and was a first-hand narration of Iranian occurrences at that time. The text received both praises and critiques in France. He received important recommendations from some of the iconic figures among Enlightenment philosophers like Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire. During 1671–1677 he lived in Ispahan for four years and had several journeys throughout Iran. The completed

in the East, i.e., the Persian King, and he attributed “despot” to the king of Persia. The following passage belongs to Chardin.

At present, then, the government of the Persians is a monarchy—despotic and absolute, since it is entirely in the hands of a single man who is the sovereign chief both in spiritual as well as in worldly affairs; the complete master of the life and goods of his subjects. There is certainly no other sovereign in the world who is as absolute as the king of Persia; for one completely and faithfully heeds his orders without examining his reasons or the circumstances, even when one sees as plainly as day that there is rarely any sense of justice in his injunctions and that they often lack even common sense ... Nothing can hinder the extravagant nature of his capriciousness—not honesty, not merit, not devotion, not past service. (Montesquieu 2008, p. 236)

The phrase is a critical observation and an assessment by direct experience from a French merchant. He indicated that the Persian king could easily ruin the life of some nobles or persons from a high position in society by a single word that comes out of his mouth (p. 236). Chardin witnessed these events, which were despotic, autocratic, tyrannical, and also arbitrary at the same time. What he wrote is evidence of ruling in accord with no laws or accusing and consequently punishing based on no justice or fair trial. It presents a difference between theoretical analysis and the actual reality or a gap between philosophical borders and historical overlaps. Eventually, it can be assumed that all the differences made by Aristotle, Montesquieu, and others are based on the occasional periods in Iranian history in which the absolute monarchy did not reach the level of tyranny or despotism, and all the monarchic decisions had a least lawful basis and accordingly were not identical with the exertion of arbitrary power. Whether we are in consent with the Western attributions to Khomeini and the Shah and whether it is justifiable to call both as despot or tyrant, there is a general judgment about the Iranian political history which is not possible to ignore it, and Western perspective in this regard is understandable. To explain the issue, mentioning some phrases of Burke's *Reflections* could help to put a light on the general Western view about the history of Iran.

They have created the late arbitrary monarchy of France. They have created the arbitrary republic of Paris. With them defects in wisdom are to be supplied by the plenitude of force. They get nothing by it. Commencing their labours on a principle of sloth, they have the common fortune of slothful men. The difficulties, which they

work is published in Amsterdam, 1711. He decided to return home in 1677, but he was forced to move to England because of the persecution of Protestants in his homeland. He died in London in 1713.

rather had eluded than escaped, meet them again in their course; they multiply and thicken on them; they are involved, through a labyrinth of confused detail, in an industry without limit, and without direction; and, in conclusion, the whole of their work becomes feeble, vicious, and insecure. (Burke 2003, p. 142)

Burke addresses the French nation on two different occasions. After he told his French reader⁴⁸ on the true meaning of political reform under the ancient and inherited form of sovereignty, Burke began to criticize French people most radically waved with his considerable rhetorical skill (p. 209). He accused the French nation of building arbitrary powers in their whole history, whether monarchical or republican. Burke's radical assessment of the whole French history at that time could also be thoroughly correct about the history of the Iranian nation. There was a "defect" in Iranian political wisdom which had risen a religious ideology boosted by anti-imperialist resentment in the second half of the 20th century. The mentioned defect belonged to the then monarchy, its opposition, and the foreign forces altogether. However, it was also related to a nation and the destiny they chose for themselves. Strictly speaking, the historical blame firstly belongs to *us* which finds its meaning in every historical period and every part of the world; "us" could mean French people in 1789, German people in 1933, or Iranian people in 1979. There remains only one point about the details of two different historical periods in contemporary Iran. Accepting the defect in Iranian political wisdom does not mean that another side of the Western perspective is also right; the side with sympathy to the Islamic Republic and with an antipathy to the Pahlavi monarchy. Indeed, the current section is supposed to clarify the historical ground of the minor assessment, within the framework of aesthetic and political theory, after finding the major assessment acceptable.

The tremendous and undeniable difference between Iranian history before 1979 and after it, prevents any neglect or any effort to make the whole period a united and unified history. The Iranian common sense and the historical facts both deny the existence of two same periods which are not varying due to the general *despotic* past and present or typical "defects in wisdom" (Burke 2003, p. 142) or the lack of integral political vision. The Western perspective considers both political structures as "despotic" without any acknowledged differences. Particularly from the ancient Iranian history till now, "the Shah" is considered merely as "the despot" by the Western criterion, without recognizing any legitimacy and any "divine right" (H. Katouzian 1981, p. 14). The hypothesis aims to claim further because the Western view on the occasion of the Islamic revolution

⁴⁸ *Reflections* had been intended to answer some questions of "a very young gentleman at Paris."

and what happened after that is not only a unifying look of these decades but also a normative standpoint that prefers the Islamic Republic more than the Pahlavi monarchy. It is crucial to assert that all of the analyses regarding the Western attitude toward two different Iranian eras is an open debate. The current articulation is just a theoretical effort to apply the term “political aestheticism,” inspired by Edmund Burke, into the hidden Western tendencies to glorify a populist theocracy rather than a secular monarchy in the history of modern Iran.

As it is emphasized in academic adherence, there should be avoidance from a priori presumption to put a political structure above the other. The mentioned discussion is related to analyze *the democratic function* of a political system to reach the highest level of goodness regarding the local and geopolitical situation of each land or region. Theoretically, it is a universalist standpoint, with inevitable particularism in its application practically. With all these considerations, it seems that monarchy as a traditional form of sovereignty in the whole world and especially in the Middle East has more capability to internalize the liberal and democratic changes. The function of old monarchic regimes in the Middle East in comparison to military governance or republican totalitarian regimes is a clue to perceive the political culture of the region in terms of the necessity of liberal reformations. The history of Iran shows a great failure to build a liberal and democratic state. The relation between society and politics in this land remains controversial, critical, and problematic. The repeating question on the priority of modern society or the priority of the modern state is still unsolved. It becomes like a logical dilemma to confuse which one exists at the first and then which one is supposed to come out from the other. The widespread standpoint that always supports the change from below and praises the social movement as an antagonist to the governmental one intentionally neglects the vital role of ruling and the direction of policies whether it is constructive or destructive. At least, the Middle-Eastern issue is to rethink the importance of a well-organized governmental reformation in order to educate the society and then to empower the educated society as a civil one to cooperate in a joint state-nation project of transitioning from an autocratic secular state to the democratic one.

It seems in Middle Eastern societies that there is no escapement from early authoritative modernization. The point is that all such processes need to convert in proper time to a democratic one. The transition from authoritative modernization to democratic modernization is the Achilles heel in the region. Iran, in the time of the Pahlavi monarchy, became open to Western culture and started to build modern social institutions. “During the 1960s and 1970s, Iranian society underwent a state-sponsored modernization program that profoundly altered economic relations, social institutions, and cultural pattern” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani

1994, p. 58). There was a national effort to educate the people in villages by the so-called “army of knowledge” or “literacy corps” (in Persian: *Sepāh-e dāneš*) which many young men and women participated in it.⁴⁹ This official educational institution built in 1962 and was one of the realizations of approved articles of the White Revolution of the Shah in the same year. The society had a revolutionary reaction to the Pahlavi modernist plan and the transition to the democratic period failed due to open the political atmosphere at the “wrong time” and then mismanage the subsequent crisis. According to a popular assessment, a major consequence of the land reforms, during the White Revolution, was to motivate an unprecedented migration from rural parts to urban centers and the isolation of marginal society from the rapid modernization of the soon-to-be upper middle class. Subsequently, rural “migrants experienced social isolation, and developed a sense of anomie” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 59). The mentioned popular analysis represented the mass anti-Shah demonstrations in 1978–79 as the soldiers of Shiite ideology who were brought to their position during the last two decades by the very Shah and his “inegalitarian” modernization. However, there are other opinions contrary to the focus on the consequences of the White Revolution, urbanization, the gap between social classes, and generally the mismanagement of the Pahlavi modernization. Although, without the internal weakness and major vulnerabilities, no government faces a revolutionary downfall. The developmental plan and domestic policy can prevent or provoke a revolution. “The Shah’s regime collapsed despite the fact that his army was intact, despite the fact that

⁴⁹ As Milani (2012) illustrates, searching for the origin of the actualized idea seemingly reaches to Eberhard Taubert as a probable advisor of “literacy corps” to the Shah. Taubert (1910–1976) was a lawyer and anti-Semitic Nazi propagandist. At the age of twenty-four, he joined the Nazi party in 1931, and soon became a specialist in both anti-communist and anti-Jewish propaganda. From 1933 to 1945 he worked as a high official in the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda under Joseph Goebbels. He has a nickname in the Nazi era as Dr. Anti. He was hired in February 1959 by SAVAK or “Organization of National Intelligence and Security of the Nation”) to help Iran for the countermove against Soviet as well as Arab Nationalist propaganda. In that time, the Shah needed to fight back specifically against the rigorous attack of Radio Moscow and generally in the time of ideological battles in broadcast news. The guess about whether the idea of recruiting soldiers to fight against illiteracy in villages and small cities were put to the Shah’s mind by Taubert is based on an oral interview of the author *The Shah* with General Alavi-Kia. The idea, according to the interviewee, “was first articulated in a policy paper that Taubert had prepared. It was a replica of the idea of *die Hitlerjugend* going to the countryside to educate illiterate peasants. And Hitler himself might have picked up the idea from the populist movement in nineteenth-century Russia where intellectuals flocked to the countryside to educate the masses.” The author emphasized that the idea of “literacy corps” has many fathers and it was a successful part of the White Revolution (p. 177).

there was no defeat in war, and let me add, despite the fact that the state faced no financial crisis and no peasant insurrections” (Amir Arjomand 1988, p. 191).

With all these considerations, Iran in the time between 1941 till 1979 was being led in the governmental path of development to reach a balance between society and state in order to constitute an open society based on the domestic policy of an authoritative liberal discourse in the social and cultural realm which was combined with the political autocracy. The Western approach toward this monarchy was somehow Eurocentric and simultaneously against European values, which were applying by the mentioned monarchy in Iran. The West saw the Shah as an oriental despot or “der persische Diktator” just like other rulers in the region (Richter 1998, p. 35). During his visit to West Germany,⁵⁰ Ulrike Meinhof⁵¹ (1967) pictured him in an open letter to Princess Farah Pahlavi as a monarch who exploited his people. Moreover, the West had the unpleasant feeling that the Shah just imitated their cultural values and that he applied a simple package of modernism into an Islamic society. The social freedom of Iranians and the relative liberal stability of the land and the region was not their interest, and they approved it by supporting the radical revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, within the political crisis from 1978 till collapsing the monarchy.

The whole structure of the Islamic Republic is a maladaptation of the political inheritance from the Constitutional Revolution of 1905. They kept the surface of each institution and changed the whole secular content to Islamic and ideological. In this regard, The Islamic Republic is a metamorphosis of the monarchic system. It disfigures the monarchy and is a deformation of the Iranian constitutional principles. It seems like a conservative dilemma to emphasize the obstinate existence of the ancient human behavioral pattern during history and simultaneously to warn about the danger of demolishing the same stubborn tradition. “Revolutions, as history seems to show, rarely change the essential character of basic

⁵⁰ On 2 June 1967, the Shah of Iran visited the Deutsche Oper in Berlin. At the same time, the planned anti-Shah demonstration took place outside in the street. The protest was managed partly by the then well-known anti-Shah student Bahman Nirumand and his German allies. Subsequent to violent clashes between police, pro-Shah Iranians, and protesters, a student i.e. Benno Ohnesorg was killed with a deadly shooting by police officer Karl-Heinz Kurras. As Passmore (2011) reminds us, the incident became a symbol of “latent fascism in the Federal Republic” and “an openly violent state.” The German student movement was radicalized due to his death and Ohnesorg became a martyr of the leftist and anti-imperialist student movement in 1970s German history. The radical Red Army faction (*Rote Armee Fraktion* or *RAF*) came out of the iconic anti-Shah demonstration in 1967.

⁵¹ Ulrike Marie Meinhof (1934–1976) was a famous journalist, a radical leftist, and later a terrorist in West Germany. She was one of the founders of the Red Army Faction in 1970.

institutions, but only emphasize—with or without external change of structure—the tendencies which are already shaping them in a given direction” (Gibb 1955, p. 16).

However, it shall be considered as a speculative venture to propose such an analysis as a destined process of history. In other words, it cannot apply to all revolutions and all periods. In this matter, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was the most significant change at the end of the 20th century not as an already foreordained tendency, but as a newly-founded way of politics as the first ruling system based on religious ideology in our contemporary history. Therefore, there is no dilemma in the mentioned conservative axiom about human nature. It has acknowledged a sort of pattern regarding how a similar rhythm of deeds shapes human history. However, the directions of human nature can be defined and oriented in an almost unprecedented or unexpected way. The Islamic revolution as an abrupt change of the body politic misdirected the essential elements of the Iranian constitution and imported Islamized ontology to the whole body politic, which includes Islamic discriminative laws and the definition of people as “servants of Allah” instead of “citizens.” The revolutionary change of the Iranian monarchy in 1979 is a true example of what Edmund Burke describes as “destructive” and in many phrases of his *Reflections* warns about its symptoms and consequences and emphasizes the opposite notion as constructive reform.

I would make the reparation as nearly as possible in the style of the building. A politic caution, a guarded circumspection, a moral rather than a complexional timidity, were among the ruling principles of our forefathers in their most decided conduct. (Burke 2003, p. 209)

There is also a narrow road that makes possible a justification of the monarchic system in our time. It is a theoretical risk to mention the probable rational dimensions of a political system that has been considered as old-fashioned and out-of-date. There is also an unproven and widespread presumption based on absolutizing the mere structure of political systems; a republic is necessarily a democratic political unit, and a monarchy is necessarily an undemocratic one. Accordingly, the republic is considered as the only way of democratic representativeness and to govern by the law. The mentioned presumption is itself standing on another unproven and deeper presumption; the election and voting is the core of any democratic system. The vital negligence is to hide the democratic meaning of any election; modern political representativeness only derives from a free election. In other words, only a democratic election represents a democracy. Surprisingly, this is another evidence for the Middle East and peculiarly its political

culture. There exists a purely Middle Eastern invention in the range of political phenomenon; a lifetime president based on what could be actualized from a republican system when it comes to the Middle East. That is to say, the ultimate capacity of importing a new political model in the Middle East is a lifetime president. The mentioned invention is a first and ancient impression of Middle Eastern people from a body politic that has been an absolute monarchy in the region for many centuries. Some countries had a constitutional shift to turn the monarchic system into a parliamentary democracy. Iran was among them for its Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911.

There was intense propaganda from opposition through the whole Pahlavi monarchy to picture that time as a thoroughly reversed process in comparison to the Constitutional Revolution and its goals. The fact that the Shah is an autocrat intentionally became generalized to picture the whole Pahlavi era as the extermination of all constitutional achievements. The truth after forty years reveals more and more that the Pahlavi monarchy represented some fundamental aspects of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution; Pahlavi made the judicial system independent from Sharia. In the Qajar era, Islamic law dominated the judiciary, as one of the most essential parts of the government. Pahlavi made the educational system and universities free from the dominating role of Shiite clericalism. The first Pahlavi emancipated the women from the compulsory Islamic veil, hijab, and the second Pahlavi let the women choose between freely social presence and the Islamic one. All of the mentioned facts were among the demands of the Constitutional Revolution. Therefore, the constructive revolution of 1905 had not only democratic goals, but also it had social, educational, and judicial purposes. Nevertheless, the lack of democratic ground for all of these achievements in the Pahlavi monarchy made them an “unauthentic change”⁵² and authoritative reform in the eyes of the opposition, intellectuals, and also from the Western perspective. In this regard, it is worth reminding that Iranian history after 1905 demonstrated that *the conditions of possibility* for democratic secularism were absent, and the most convincing evidence is the Islamic revolution of 1979. The ancient religiosity of the

⁵² It's worth questioning the definition of an authentic change. Otherwise, authenticity means the necessity of returning to vague origins. In fact, using the word “authenticity” as an adjective has a sound of anti-Western particularism in national politics contrary to universalism. This kind of particularism can be founded on both left and right sides of political vision. The common ground is a kind of nationalism which tries to discover something in the past or make a thoroughly new basis for a body politic. Both are disconnected from the historical and international experience to build a nation-state in its successful cases. It is needed to reflect more on what is authentic and what is not. There are universal criteria to measure the validity of any political plan. The local formations are subjected to acceptance if and only lay in the global criteria and minimum standards of legitimate sovereignty.

Iranians rejected the left parties and turned face to Ayatollah Khomeini as both religious and political leader. Lots of lessons lie in all coincidences from 1978 till 1980. The same event of leaving the country by the Shah and returning to Iran by Ayatollah Khomeini had a meaningful message to the nation who “chose” to keep the political pyramid and religionize its content. The Iranian nation at that time wanted to bring the body politic into conformity with religious ideology. The left opposition to the Shah could not gain considerable support from Iranians and the real representative of people’s demand, glorifying political Shiism, was not the leftist leaders but Ayatollah Khomeini.

3.4.2 Pahlavi and the Sublimity

As a clarification of the related theory, it is necessary to define two terms, i.e., *beauty* and *sublimity*, by the philosophical analysis of Edmund Burke. His noble theoretical effort is to explain the mechanism in our faculty or reason to recognize ideas and all the related categories like sublime and beautiful. The human mind is capable of being categorized and simultaneously prevents us from putting the human senses, which enable us to catch the external reality, into determined categories. Therefore, the process of making categories and analyzing based on them, when it goes in the realm of human senses, different cognitive sections, and the relationship between passions and reason, is not an easy task, and cannot be truly coherent, consistent, and persuasive. However, it is inevitable and at least a well-articulated way, with a long speculative history in Western philosophy, of assessing our perception of reality. Burke focused on the connection between “imagination” and “judgment” and the result of their mutual interactions to rise a sublime sensation or beautiful one and to perceive them through a systematic structure of knowledge. He is mostly concerned about how reality can give birth to “ideas” and how the new ideas are capable of motivating “passions” and also give borders and contents to our feelings. As Ferguson (2007) explains, Burke’s aesthetic inquiry became later a part of his political philosophy and his analysis of the European crisis in 1789 (pp. 619, 620).

It is worth asserting the differentiation between the aesthetics of Burke and romanticism. The attitude of Burke toward public affairs is both aesthetic and political. Burke always insisted on the vitality of emotions in politics. However, all of his speculations about the role of moral feelings in politics and his explanation of the moral imagination do not identify him as a romanticist. As Cassirer (1946) reminds us, “Romanticism had not only its philosophy of nature, of art

and history, but also its philosophy of politics. But in this field the romantic writers never developed a clear and coherent theory; nor were they consistent in their practical attitude” (p. 180). The shared emphasis on the past, on the inheritance, on the emotion, and Christianity are not articulated from the same standpoint; conservatism advocated the Western civilization based on political philosophy and romanticism defends the past mostly in a poetic and uncritical way. The conservatism defends prejudice as part of human defects which should be reasonably acknowledged. The romantics resist the compartmentalization of science without a systematic basis. Romanticism observes all human knowledge in a holistic way and aims to unite religion, philosophy, and art with emotion and with such other nonrational elements. However, when romanticists mock the concept of “maturity” in Kant’s philosophy of Enlightenment (Fleischacker 2013), they cannot give an opposed argumentation. Conversely, conservatism defends human defects as a part of our nature, and its pessimism aims to consolidate human imperfection and lawful governance. In other words, the poetic considerations are not equal to the speculative standpoint. We have romantic philosophers, but it is hard to derive a political theory from romanticism. Respectively, the analysis of Western political aesthetics and its relation with the Western perception of contemporary Iranian history cannot be considered as a romantic perspective. In section 4.1.3, the defects of Pahlavi conservatism are discussed by assessing its romantic spirituality. The debate of the current chapter is a philosophical articulation of the roots of the Western sympathy with the Iranian theocracy. Back to the clarification of Burkean terms, De Bolla (1989) in *The Discourse of the Sublime* expresses that the ethico-rhetorical enterprise of the Sublime and its subsequent alterations in the eighteenth century can be referred to as empirical psychology (p. 33).

The discourse on the sublime places external authority as the control for its analyses and descriptions, as the reference point that authenticates its findings. This external authority may take many forms, from the theological to the social, but its legitimating power is always present and capable of being summoned up. (De Bella 1989, pp. 34, 35)

As Dreyer (2013) indicates, *Enquiry* demonstrates the adherence of Burke to the epistemology of John Locke (1632–1704). In this regard, the Burkean aesthetics is committed to the British tradition of empiricism. Burke professes that the human knowledge of aesthetic concepts like the sublime and the beautiful are eventually psychological. He affirms, as a follower of Locke, that our ideas are a derivation from our experience. In this regard, “Burke attempts to show that our standards of beauty are things which are prescribed not by the nature of existence

but by the constitution of the human mind” (Dreyer 2013, p. 113). Concerning Burke’s aesthetics, there is a shift in his philosophy at the time between the *Enquiry* and *Reflections*. Burke paid more attention to the socio-political aspects of the Sublime when he was writing his last great work, as if his ontological insight about the social bonds and his belief in the eternal entity of society and state, could be the result of his speculative turn to the political sublime in the *Reflections*. As Neumann indicates, Burke added a section named exactly ‘power,’ to the second edition of the *Enquiry* and insists that “I know of nothing sublime which is not some modification of power” (Neumann 2006, p. 875). When he was writing the *Reflections*, he realized that it is also possible to find a sublimity or formidable aspects in a perceivable pleasure of the beautiful in the idea of the “great mysterious incorporation of the human race”, in which “the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progress” (Burke 2003, p. 29). In his later speculative period, persons do not perceive themselves as an antagonist to others or objects as they did in the *Enquiry*. Oppositely, individuals continually assess themselves through their obligations to others, and find a use even for prejudice, to make “a man’s virtue his habit” and “his duty ... a part of his nature” (pp. 74, 75). Therefore, Burke’s political aestheticism represents the civic duty as a sense comes from some prejudices, which is, in its turn, the combined phenomenon of the beautiful and the sublime. Burke starts to define his terms by the *beauty*. He invites readers to think about the ordinary usage of the word, which is unclear and undetermined, and its border of notion with other words is not recognizable accurately.

By beauty I mean, that quality or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it. I confine this definition to the merely sensible qualities of things, for the sake of preserving the utmost simplicity in a subject which must always distract us, whenever we take in those various causes of sympathy which attach us to any persons or things from secondary considerations, and not from the direct force which they have merely on being viewed. (Burke 1990, p. 83)

Burke (1990) explains more his aesthetic ideas by saying that the *sublime* “in all things abhors mediocrity” and he gave an example of darkness and light as two phenomena which are opposed to each other and simultaneously with the “imagined reconciled in the extremes of both” they are enabled to represent the other at each of their own picks. For example, looking for a while at the sun normally creates two dancing black spots in front of our eyes. Both darkness and light are in sympathy and coexist to produce the Sublime (pp. 73, 74). The Sublime is against any ordinariness and the average state of affairs that surrounded us.

Only outstanding things, which sometimes have no regular aesthetic form, can lie under the Sublime. As mentioned before, the Sublime in Burke's thoughts urges us to think about the societal hierarchy, imperial power, and dealing with the authority as a species of mystification. The Sublime in Burke's philosophy is intrinsically political. He indicates that our ignorance of things causes all our admiration. He praises in poems of John Milton (1608–1674)⁵³ “the power of a well managed darkness” and suggests that “a clear idea is another name ... for a little idea” (Burke 1990, p. xv). In this regard, Burke emphasizes that Sublime, as a category, “begins to include the sacred and the serious, the transcendent and ... the privilege of an ‘incomprehensible darkness’ that reason cannot, or as Burke will increasingly believe, must not, dispel” (Burke 1990, p. xxii). The Sublime is an outcome of human ignorance and prejudice, which Burke believes, contrary to the French philosophers, on their inevitability as a part of natural human characteristics. That is why he constantly refers to the idea of “pure reason” as an increasing dogma of the Enlightenment. His aesthetic thoughts are also connected to his criticism of the domination of reason and abstract ideas on all the existential compartments of human life (Burke 2003, pp. 33, 51). Neumann (2006) illustrates that the key passion for Burke to represent the ontological symptomatic of the Sublime, among all certain human characteristics, is fear and terror. “Burke concentrates on the body itself, as a thing to be stroked, for example, but first and foremost as a thing to be watched” (p. 874). In this regard, the corporeal analogies were parts of all metaphysical reflections about politics in the West and the East.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the following quotation of the *Enquiry* is the most explanatory phrase to clarify the Sublime which is almost in accord with the purpose of the current subject to assess the Western attitudes toward Khomeini and Pahlavi is as following.

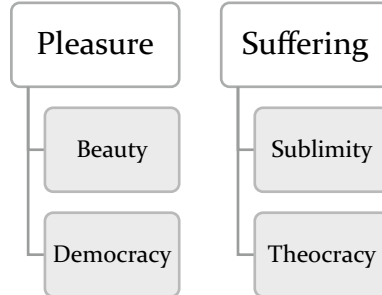
The passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so

⁵³ John Milton was an English poet, polemicist, the man of letters, and civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under its Council of State and later under Oliver Cromwell. He is best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667), written in blank verse.

⁵⁴ In this regard, Rashidian (1978) indicates that the Iranian political philosophy, even in its most rational expressions, could not prevent itself from applying the natural logic to the socio-political logic. He indicates that the philosophers always tried to find similarities between the human body and social construction. Rashidian concludes that this continuous pursuing of animalism in political philosophy demonstrates the desire to create an integrated social body like physiological construction. Eventually, the necessity of such a dynamic body politic for these societies is a definite and determined need.

entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence and respect. (Burke 1990, p. 53)

The central claim, based on Burke's theorization, is to build a theoretical standpoint to attribute "the beauty" to the Pahlavi monarchy and "the Sublime" to the Khomeini's political system in the eyes of the West. Particularly, it is momentous that Burke starts the next section with the title of 'Terror' and explained the role of fear in representing the Sublime. He indicates that fear is the only feeling with the ability to seize the whole human mind, and no other passion can compete with it in this matter. Fear is the closest understanding of death or pain, and its structure is more consistent with representing the actual pain. Burke (1990) asserts that terror⁵⁵ is the ruling principle of the Sublime (pp. 53, 54). The following diagram represents how pleasure could lead to beauty as a metaphorical element of democracy and how suffering (or pain) could be perceived as a way to sublimity, which is the essence of theocracy.



According to Burke (1990), the superiority of the Sublime in comparison with the inferiority of the Beauty is undeniable. "Pain is always inflicted by power in some way superior because we never submit to pain willingly. So that strength, violence, pain, and terror, are ideas that rush in upon the mind together" (p. 60).

⁵⁵ Burke appeals to the same words in different languages identifying the modes of astonishment, admiration, and those of terror, as testimonies for his ideas. For example, he refers to the Roman word of *stupeo*, being used as a verb, which has decisive connotations of the state of an astonished mind.

Let us add a supplementary part to the mentioned phrase of Burke. We never submit to pain willingly, but we can submit to pain unconsciously. The additional expression seems to enlighten what Iranians did to themselves in 1979. As a philosophical analogy, the Pahlavi monarchy more resembles *the idea of beauty*, and Khomeini's theocracy is more similar to *the idea of sublime*. Consequently, the Pahlavi monarchy lays definitely in a lower position, when the mentioned Western perspective compares it to the Islamic Republic.⁵⁶ It is vital to mention that the resemblance between the Pahlavi monarchy and democracy concerning the idea of pleasure is theoretical and is based only on the perspective of the West; they had seen theocratic alternative fascinating in comparison with their own democracies and the autocratic monarchy. For, both of them had a shared deviated position from the Christian piety. The final part of the chapter aims to connect Western political aestheticism to the history of Neoplatonic tradition, the history of Gnosticism and the esoteric aspects of modernity, and finally what the West inherited as a Christian asceticism. As Hanegraaff (2009) reminds us, European esotericism had various periods from secular esotericists in the nineteenth century to anti-secular ones in the 20th century. The latter defined conservatism, traditionalism, and elitist worldview against secularization, modernization, democratization, and social emancipation. However, European esotericism is prone to be politicized under the Christian archetype of unity between divinity and politics.

It is a reflection of deep structures in European culture which have to do with the complex dialectics of simultaneous attraction and rejection between biblical monotheistic traditions on the one hand, and the "pagan" traditions of Platonism and Hermetism on the other ... We are committed to critical methodologies which historically, since the 18th century, have played a crucial emancipatory role by undermining the political dominance of traditional religious authority and helping create the foundations of modern secular democracies. (Hanegraaff 2009, pp. 5, 6)

⁵⁶ It is necessary to assert that the claims in this regard are mostly metaphoric, based on philosophical analogies, and are at a clear distance from the realpolitik and all the conflicts in the diplomatic realm between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the West in general. The current chapter does not intend to deny the many Western conflicts concerning the newly established theocracy in Iran. However, it puts a light on the denial side of Western approaches regarding the many cooperation with an anti-Western government, which has been always clear to fight against Western values, to export its Islamic ideology to the region and therefore to destabilize the Middle East, to declare publicly the will to banish Israel from the map and to manage directly many terrorist plans all around the world.

The severe self-discipline piety of the Christian asceticism to avoid all kinds of pleasures is considered by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) as Christian nihilism or a kind of nihilism that is more related to Christianity than other religious traditions. He defines nihilism as “the highest values de-value themselves” (Nietzsche 1980, p. 350) or “the revaluation of values” (Reginster 2008, p. 2) which aims the affirmation of life by rejecting the metaphysical meaning of life, whether being offered in the form of religion or morality. As Reginster reminds us, Nietzsche’s criticism of Christianity is connected to his Dionysian wisdom, which is contrary to the idea of suffering in Christianity (p. 52). “Nietzsche’s opposition to Christianity bears fundamentally on the role and significance of suffering in human existence” (p. 231).

The very idea of suffering has a close tie with the current issue to assess the Western political aesthetics toward the Iranian theocracy. What he called “the illness of bad conscience reached a terrible and sublime peak” or “a truly monstrous level of sublime feeling” or “the senselessness of suffering” belongs to the Christian idea of redemption through suffering (Nietzsche 2006, p. 44). He even considers some specific form of Christianity like fideism as a sort of intellectual virtue, resulted in the intellectual impotence (Reginster 2008). The resentment and incapacity come out of the very impotence which is, in itself, a finding from the denial attitude toward the will of the power, whether the will to the political power or other ends, and whether the denial is intellectual or ascetical. It is true that Nietzsche’s criticism of metaphysics is not confined to Christianity and covers a wide spectrum of ideas from Platonism to Buddhism as “a nihilistic turning-away from existence” (Nietzsche 2006, p. 63). The latter differs from Christianity by being more realistic due to the Buddhist struggle against suffering, instead of the Christian struggle against sin. His objection targets all form of permanence, any alleged superior plane of being, which Nietzsche wants to devalue it. The devaluation of permanence includes both eternity and nothingness (Reginster 2008, p. 224). In other words, the condemnation of earthly existence is not limited to the Christian faith. However, Christian nihilism is at the center of his critique due to its pervasive presence in European morality. With all the Nietzschean considerations, the Christian nihilism of Europe in its support of the theocracy in Iran resulted in intensifying the Iranian nihilism and distrust to the West along with the Iranian zeal to build a nation-state in accord with the global Western values.

Two points are needed to be explained about this chapter, which has a somehow unprecedented analysis of the relation between Iran and the West in terms of political philosophy and aesthetics. First, the analysis remains as a philosophical

abstraction, if the differences and counterfactual realities. In the case of emphasizing Christian nihilism and sublimating the suffering in order to explain the Western attitude toward Pahlavi and Khomeini, the United States can be considered as a counterexample. In the American world, the culture is more Christian than Europe, and the relation with Iran had been more pro-Pahlavi than Europe, regardless of the negative picture of Jimmy Carter⁵⁷ in the Iranian society because they considered him as a betrayal partner who turned his back from the Shah and paved the way for Khomeini.⁵⁸ The missed point is that the United States has a political culture that combines the domestic Christian faith with the idea of liberating as an international ideology.

The anti-imperialism during the Cold War turned into the anti-Americanism “that see the United States as the central villain in the world today” (Rubinstein and Smith 1988, pp. 35–45). The liberating American policy or the idea that people under dictatorships must be liberated was a paradoxical attitude in dealing with different such regimes, especially in the Middle East. The anti-American dictators took benefit from the mentioned double standard concerning the pro-American competitors in the region, in order to mobilize domestic support or to identify “a plausible scapegoat for governmental failure” (pp. 35–45). Therefore, anti-Americanism in the Third World works to justify the tyrannical rule, for the United States is always the exclusive target of blame for bad governance. However, the American claim and rhetoric are against the inactiveness, which is woven with Christian nihilism in accord with Nietzsche’s philosophy. In this regard, there is a formula in the American policy that resembles the idea of “the will to the power”; the American mission is to support democracy as the people’s will to the power. The war in Iraq and Afghanistan was the extreme example of the mentioned ideology of liberating, which the European policy cannot get used to it, at least not as a beginner or as a leader. Therefore, Europe prefers to be cautious, observing the subsequent state of affairs, and then follows the American paved path. Put another way, “The real problem, according to Nietzsche, is not the past, not even Christianity, but present-day Christian-moral Europe” (Nietzsche

⁵⁷ In contrary to the narration of many Iranian royalists, as Milani (2012) illustrates, the political pressure of the Shah to reform finds its early precedent in the last years of the Republican president Dwight D. Eisenhower.

⁵⁸ It seems that the Iranian sense of hatred against Jimmy Carter is in accord with the native conspiracy theory or at least it is not fully aligned with the approach of his administration during the crisis of 1978–79. Regardless of the disputable American role to convince the royal army of declaring neutrality, as Nikazmerad (1980) reminds us, Carter officially showed his support of the Shah on many occasions, accused Khomeini indirectly of provoking bloodshed and violence, and eventually supported the legal government of Bakhtiar.

2006, p. xxvi). The same Christian impotence, in Nietzschean view, leads Europe to step back in all the international disruptions out of its continent.

The second point is to indicate that connecting the Western policy toward Pahlavi and Khomeini in general, does not mean to justify the old Iranian conspiracy theories that is, in itself, a symptom of a despotic political culture. The Iranian poetic ontology intensified those conspiracy theories due to their compatibility with the Iranian poetic wisdom, always emphasizing determinism, heavenly planned fate, and the absence of free will in human life. In other words, assessing the Western political aesthetics toward Pahlavi and Khomeini does not imply the political superstition that the West already planned the 1979 Revolution against the Shah.⁵⁹ Although, the chapter claims theoretically that the discussed perspective led the West to accept the spiritual and political authority of Ayatollah Khomeini in front of the “earthly existence” of the Pahlavi monarchy.

To connect the 1979 revolution to the idea of political sublimity, Let us not forget that even if Khomeini had no theory like what he explained and then applied to Iran as the “guardianship of the jurist,” he still would have seen as a politician “without a systematic formulation of political theory.” As an inspiration of what Nitschke (2015) illustrates about the political philosophy of the 17th and 18th centuries, Khomeini reflected “the phenomena of power and reign” in the light of a theological narration which is in fact “a technique of power” (p. 200). Being inspired by the articulation of Nitschke (2017) on the logic of biblical politics within his explanation of thoughts of Walzer, it is worth mentioning that the political “mosaic theology” after 1979 in Iran seems to be really fascinating for the West. In this sense, the Islamic Revolution was structuring all the patterns of real perception with reference to God, as if the Iranian Shiite hierarchy reveals as a miracle for “standardization of social order in a theocratic perspective” (pp. 284, 285). Relevantly, the sublime performance of Khomeini⁶⁰, his short, uncompleted, and sometimes *nonsense* Persian sentences, and his *speech act* all remind us of what Burke describes in section VI under the title of *Privation*.

⁵⁹ Homayoun (1984) was one of those politicians and thinkers who tried to confront the Iranian conspiracy theory. Related to the foreign role in 1979, he asserts that “the issue of what the United States and the Great Britain did during 1978–79 is more belonged to Americans and British people. The related issue to Iranians is what they, themselves, did in that time” (p. 38).

⁶⁰ As Joudaki (2012) articulates, there is a possibility that Khomeini chose this kind of language intentionally as part of his populist policy. According to Joudaki, there are some sayings or witnesses that prove his ability to speak Persian in a normal way like ordinary people.

All general privations are great, because they are all terrible; *Vacuity*, *Darkness*, *Solitude* and *Silence*. With what a fire of imagination, yet with what severity of judgment, has Virgil amassed all these circumstances where he knows that all the images of a tremendous dignity ought to be united, at the mouth of hell! where before he unlocks the secrets of the great deep, he seems to be seized with a religious horror, and to retire astonished at the boldness of his own design. (Burke 1990, p. 65)

In comparison to the heavenly, horrifying and sacred speeches of Khomeini, the language of the Shah appears as earthly, ordinary, and secular. The Burkean theoretical terms are also applicable in this matter; the Sublime language of Khomeini in front of the beautiful language of the Shah. With all these considerations, there were plenty of Western supporting declarations and reactions on the Islamic Revolution 1978–79 and the very character of Ayatollah Khomeini. The spectrum of these official or public statements covers a varied range of opinions from a positive view to a zealous enthusiasm articulated by intellectuals and politicians of the Western countries from Europe to the United States. Falk (1930-), American professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, published an article in *The New York Times* on 16 February 1979, five days after the collapse of the Pahlavi monarchy. In his read named “Trusting Khomeini,” Falk said that Khomeini is not an anti-Semite. Reversely, he was a strong one.

With respect to Khomeini’s benighted views of Jews, these were likewise consistent in his writings and utterances. At the time of his confrontation with the Shah in 1963, he grouped them with the “enemies of Islam.” Eight years later, he sent a message from Najaf to Muslim pilgrims warning them of “a handful of Jews who are the servants of imperialism.” Khomeini clearly expressed anti-Semitism in *Islam and Revolution*, calling the Jews “satanic” and labeling them “agents of America, Britain, and other foreign powers.” (Simpson 2017, pp. 233–255)

Falk said Jews would have no problem in the coming Islamic government. Prior to 1979, there were 100,000 Jews in Iran, and in 2007 the Jewish population decreased to less than 8700. It means that near 90 percent of them left the country after the Islamic Revolution. With a gesture of an Islamic scholar, Falk asserted that “the Shiite tradition is flexible in its approach to the Koran and evolves interpretations that correspond to the changing needs and experience of the people.” Surprisingly, people were stoned to death, and their hands were cut according to Sharia after 1979. Falk invited the whole world to rely on the promises of Khomeini on bringing equal rights and justice because the Ayatollah said that the future rulers do “not live very differently from the ordinary person.” Actually, he built a clerical-military-industrial-commercial complex in Iran (Amir Arjomand 2012, p. 61). In the end, Falk was optimistic that “Iran may yet provide us with

a desperately-needed model of humane governance for a third-world country.” In fact, Iran and the Middle East experienced an unprecedented clerical tyranny in their history. Falk’s view on social justice is clearly related to Christian asceticism and political piety as is discussed earlier. As another example, Andrew Young (1932-), the 14th United States Ambassador to the United Nations, calls Khomeini “a Saint” (“Young Praises Islam as ‘Vibrant’ And Calls the Ayatollah ‘a Saint’” 1979). Young going considerably further in his views than the Carter Administration, declared that it would be “impossible to have a fundamentalist Islamic state” in Iran (para. 4). Actually, “the impossible” in Young’s imagination thoroughly became possible in Iran and occurred in the newly-established form of expansionist Shiite clericalism.

Nevertheless, what the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) expressed about the Revolution of 1979 was beyond any imagination. Foucault (1988) described Shia Islam as “the spirit of a world without spirit,” and a religion that enabled “a radical transformation of the subjectivity of the people” (pp. 211–215). As Afary (2009) notes, “In 1978 Foucault hoped that the Iranian Revolution would become a countermodern revolution that would unleash a radical form of political spirituality for Iran and the broader Muslim world” (p. 267). His attribution as “political spirituality” to the revolutionary occurrence of 1979 seemingly became his coinage of misunderstanding about the revivalist Shiite ideology which was on the eve of seizing the political power in Iran. As Ali Mirsepassi reminds us, the doctrine of political spirituality was not the original term of Foucault. It was the intellectual creation of a group of European philosophers and historians of religion in the 1930s. The splendid articulation of a theory belongs to Louis Massignon (1883–1962), and then further developed by Henry Corbin.

Foucault articulates a “positive” political theory of “political spirituality,” and speaks fondly of the Ayatollah Khomeini’s “mythical” leadership in this massive revolutionary process of social change developing in Iran at the time ... The politics of spirituality were represented practically in the experiment of post-revolutionary Iran. What we have seen of the Islamic Republic of Iran has failed to offer much, and its Iranian victims are witness to how this new state has violated the dignity and humanity of those with different religious or political views. Foucault was silent after 1979 on the topic of Iran and the Islamic Republic, until his death in 1984. (Mirsepassi 2017, p. 167)

Edmund Burke (1990), in his explanation of the Sublime, illustrates that ordinary people are not sublime, because “The sublime object is beyond doubt or criticism; the sublime experience is one of domination” (p. xxii). Accordingly,

Khomeini was not among ordinary people. On the contrary, Khomeini was a mysterious spiritual leader of an iconic revolution. Khomeini was sublime. That is why Burke defines the counter-sublime as “a strength that is subservient and innoxious” (Burke 1990, p. xxii). There should be unimaginable harm to bring an incident to the sublime realm. In accordance, the harmless figure cannot be sublime. Similarly, the emotion with all of its enormous strength “should be employed to the purposes of rapine and destruction” (p. 60). That power derives all its sublimity from the terror.” The terror makes it possible for an emotion to undress its ability to hurt in a considerable destructive way. Burke enlightens the concept of the Sublime by exemplifies it thorough quoting a phrase from John Milton’s poem, which illustrates the *disastrous twilight sheds on half the nations; and with fear of change perplexes monarchs*. Burke infers that the sublimity of Milton’s poetic imagination comes out of the ruining picture of monarchy and all the darkness which is woven in given critical circumstances.

Here is a very noble picture; ... the ruin of monarchs, and the revolutions of kingdoms. The mind is hurried out of itself, by a croud of great and confused images; which affect because they are crouded and confused. For separate them, and you lose much of the greatness, and join them, and you infallibly lose the clearness. (Burke 1990, p. 57)

The confusion, the vagueness, the fear, *the emptiness* (Burke 1990, p. 43), and the terror all are present in Iran during 1978–79. Even Michel Foucault (1988) as a sanctifier of the Islamic Revolution professed that “The Iranians themselves are swimming in that ambiguity [of the religious phenomenon]” (p. 213) because Burke already illuminates that “in utter darkness, it is impossible to know in what degree of safety we stand” (p. 130). Accordingly, the Islamic Revolution is a glaring example of what Burke explains as the Sublimity. The Western confusion about the tyrannical entity of the revolutionary rage in 1979 reminds us of the articulation of German-American political philosopher and classicist Leo Strauss (1899–1973). Strauss asserts on the defects of contemporary philosophical theories which make theorists incapable of identifying a given tyrannical occurrence at the right time

When we were brought face to face with tyranny-with a kind of tyranny that surpassed the boldest imagination of the most powerful thinkers of the past-our political science failed to recognize it. It is not surprising then that many of our contemporaries, disappointed or repelled by present-day analyses of present-day tyranny. (Strauss 2013, p. 23)

In a Burkean explanation of what Strauss diagnoses, the tyranny on the eve of its actualization becomes sublime, and the sublime cannot be captured in the time of being realized. As a third spectator, it is almost impossible to keep a distance from a horriification, and “with certain modifications,” finds it delightful. The horror occupies human perception. “When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible” (Burke 1990, pp. 36, 37). All of the mentioned facts on the supporting policy of the West toward Ayatollah Khomeini and against the Pahlavi monarchy were historical negligence on what the prominent American statesman, political scientist, and diplomat Henry Kissinger (1923-) had called the global affection from anti-Western ideologies which includes the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

The elusive problem of peace would have been difficult enough in any circumstances; in our time it is compounded by ideological conflict. In periods heavily influenced by ideology, political loyalties no longer coincide with national boundaries ... Many new nations are swept by an ideology whose central tenet, if not Communism, is powerfully anti-Western in the name of anti-imperialism; a crucial new conflict is the struggle between moderates and radicals in the developing world. In such conditions a domestic upheaval in any country can cause a major shift in international alignments. Nations begin to feel threatened not only by foreign policies but also and perhaps especially by domestic transformations. A liberalized Communist regime in Prague, which in no way challenged Soviet preeminence in foreign policy, caused the Soviet Union in 1968 to invade rather than risk the contagion of ideas that it feared could spread elsewhere in its empire. Ten years later the upheaval in Iran shook stability throughout the Middle East. (Kissinger 1979, p. 91)

It is discussed earlier what Nietzsche calls Christian nihilism when he fundamentally criticizes the ascetic history of Christianity. Randall (1926), the American philosopher, asserts that Western civilization still suffers from Christian asceticism as an inheritance of the Neoplatonic era (p. 65). Randall believes that despite all the modern alterations, the Western people have a deep sense of guilt for the loss of Christian dominance in medieval Europe. Randall recognizes the sense of regret in all hedonistic moments of Westerners. The righteousness of the Christian piety has not left the soul of Western people to make them hesitant and ask themselves constantly that “is it the true form of living?” Randall finds the roots of the Western sense of guilty of being westernized in the Neoplatonic ontology, for “Christianity as a great and comprehensive system has always been fundamentally Neo-Platonic in its philosophy” (p. 46). Eventually, the combination of two Western senses of guilt has led to the politics of appeasement toward the Islamic Republic as a clear anti-Western government; the sense of guilt to end Christianity as the center of the Western empire, and the sense of guilt about

colonialism. The result of the paradoxical aspect, i.e. the Western self-hatred and the Western-centrism, ends up neglecting a ruler who delivers following such statement in the 40th anniversary of his government.

Today, after forty annual celebrations of the victory of the Revolution ... one of the two centers of animosity has already perished, and the second one is struggling with predicaments that signal its death in the near future. Whereas, the Islamic Revolution is advancing while preserving and adhering to its mottos. ... Then, the revolution of the Iranian nation transformed the bipolar world of that day into a three polar world, and then, with the fall and disappearance of the Soviet Union and its allies and the emergence of new poles of power, the new dichotomy of “Islam and the Arrogant Front” became a prominent phenomenon of the contemporary world and the focal point that is attracting the world’s attention. (Khamenei 2019, para. 14)

Ali Khamenei, the current supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, predicts in his statement that the Western civilization will collapse and he claims that the Islamic power in the third bloc within the Eastern bloc and the Western bloc. As Assoudeh (2017) indicates, “In Shia-Iranian context, the new Islamic civilization is built when Iranian self is unified in a world of Shiism” (para. 40). The very ideology of the Islamic Republic is a branch of “Third Worldism” in accord with the Shiite understanding. It is nativist xenophobia that is woven with Shiite revivalism. As Keddie articulates, it is “The Manichean trends sees the world as largely divided into the just Muslim oppressed and the Western or Western-tied oppressors” (Keddie 1983, p. 596). The Shiite hatred against the West had been born by the very emergence of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and it is not a novel approach in the reign of the current *walī-i faqih*. Although, the “reformists” neglected this fact to cover the image of the founder of the Islamic Republic due to their ideological adherence to Ayatollah Khomeini and their political influence under his reign till 3 June 1989, i.e., the death of the founder and the beginning of the leadership by Ali Khamenei. Cumulatively, the positive Western view toward Shiism is as if they’re still in wonder by the incident of 1979 and do not want to believe that the Islamic Republic is the contemporary representation of the political Shiism and that the partnership of Shiite clergies with revolutionary guard officers is based on promoting the West as “ungodly” civilization. That is why the Shiite ideology aimed “to purify the Iranian society of non-Islamic influences” allegedly implemented by the pro-Western Pahlavi monarchy (McEoin 1984, p. 18). The West is still in a denial state to accept that Khomeinism wants to purify the rest of the world from the stain of Western civilization as well. The border between “the will” and “the ability” is deemed as the Islamic Republic had even no such a purpose, which has numerous counterfactual evidence in the last four decades.



From the Constitutional Revolution to the Shiite Ideology

4

Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations.

(The Bible: Authorized King James Version. Oxford University Press, 1998, Old Testament, Book of Deuteronomy 9:5)

It is the truth that our constitutionalists became despots, and advocates of the rule of law had lawless deeds, and forefronts of the development put a hand in the hands of Mullahs, and the revolutionary leftist intellectuals became the soldiers of Khomeini. Our history is not perfect. Otherwise, we would have no such deep disagreements between ourselves. However, the mentioned fact should make us more modest and more aware of the historical restrictions of our forefathers. All those who ended up with shame and insignificance once had started with ideal dreams and precious purposes.

(Daryush Homayoun. *Gozār az Tārikh*/ Passing through history. Nashr-e Alborz, 3. Aufl., 2007, p. 18.)

Related to the subject of the thesis, the last chapter aims to rethink the coalition against the Shah. The essence of the coalition was formed with the exact two opposite orientations: political radicalism and religious radicalism. It consisted of a revolutionary attitude in both politics and religion. There is, albeit a theoretical overlap between reformistic approach, revolutionary attitude, and traditional approach toward religion. Logically and historically, a reformist plan has necessarily a revolutionary aspect, but the opposite is not always true. The clearest

example in Iranian history is the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini and his simple political theory as the “guardianship of the jurist.” It was somehow a revolutionary idea that shifted the political piety of Shiism into an aggressive governmental ideology. However, Kasravi’s reformist plan was revolutionary and at the same time, respected Modern science, secularism, and also bureaucratic developments. In this case, as is discussed in chapter 2, the terms *revolutionary*, *reformist*, and *conservative/traditionalist* have many overlaps and common conceptual borders.

Regardless of the safest policy to open the political realm (the reversed policy directed Pahlavi monarchy into the collapsing process), the main claim is an alternative possibility on the coalescence of political conservatism and religious reformation as a preventing coalition of boosting the effectiveness of the oppositional side in 1979. There are other prevailing accounts of roots of the Islamic Revolution with many statistics about the rate of urbanization in that decade and the situation of the middle class and the oil’s price and other similar analysis which could lay under the political economy. Nevertheless, apart from the indisputable validity of the mentioned analytical model of revolutions includes 1979 in Iran, the current thesis is about the supposed relationship between political thoughts of statesmen and the religious reformists after the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 till the downfall of the Pahlavi monarchy. The last Shah of Iran faced many religious threats include the murder of Ahmad Kasravi in 1946, the beginning of the Islamic terrorist group of Fedāʾiān-e eslām in the same year, and the Islamic uprising of 1963.

4.1 Rethinking of Iranian Conservatism

By all these facts and analysis, it is problematic to apply the exact concept of conservatism in Western political history to the Iranian context. The whole Pahlavi era still appears as a vague and paradoxical time of glory and humiliation. The country was being driven by the scientific and well-planned developing process. However, the majority of Iranians felt that all the achievements are only a foreign plan, and consequently, they did not believe their own share and efforts under the monarchical system to develop the country. Moreover, there was an extensive negative Shiite sense about the kind of nationalism that the monarchy proceeded in that time. In this regard, there are some crucial points related to understanding the historical entity of Iranian political conservatism from the beginning of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 till the end of the Pahlavi monarchy.

4.1.1 The Theme is About the Monarchical Conservatism in Pre-revolutionary Iran

Mentioning the kind of political conservatism in which all the previous descriptive narrations and prescriptive analyses took place, is essential to perceive the theoretical claims of the thesis. Historically, we only have the experience of monarchical conservatism before the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Accordingly, this research is based on the assessment of monarchical conservatism and its relation to religious reformation in Iran. As mutual reflexive concepts, the terms of political reformation and religious conservatism are also inevitable to be assessed by the same research. Put another way, political conservatism brings an immediate impression of political reformation, and religious reformation reflects religious conservatism directly. Each of these concepts introduces the other, and all of these opposite notions lay under the general category, that is to say, the dilemma of change and preservation. To clear and determine the general concepts, religious reformation here means Islamic, and more specifically, Shiite reformation. In the same way, political conservatism in this inquiry means “monarchical”, and more precisely, Pahlavi conservatism. To reach a result from these two premises, the thesis discusses the relationship between the kind of conservatism in the Pahlavi era and the kind of reformation in the Shiite discourse, whether the Shiite reformists were moderate, i.e., modernist approach, or belonged to the radical mentality. The latter tendency is also considered religious revivalism.

The Islamic notion of “time” constantly refers to a pure moment in the past and subsequently is a negator of “progression” and moving forward in time which is fundamentally devaluated as a threat to the archetypal era. Therefore, Islamic piety has a regressive aspect of representing the Muslim community “more prone to corruption (*fasad*) and degeneration” (Haj 2009, p. 8). As Haj reminds us, Islamic revivalism cannot be considered as an innovation or novelty in history. On the contrary, “it is deeply embedded in the Islamic tradition, which conceptualizes human history as a continuum of renewal, revival, and reform (*tajdid, ihya², and islah*)” (p. 7). All these concepts work to ensure the continuity of Islam by “going back to the authoritative corpus to evaluate whether current norms and beliefs fall within the institutional and conceptual boundaries authorized by the Qur’an and the Sunna” (p. 7). Accordingly, a revivalist is a proclaimer of redefining the true faith and reasserting the resurrection of Islamic moral codes in society. In this narration, the conceptual boundary between a revivalist and reformer is being overshadowed. For, the will to revive the early pure Islamic era is intrinsically a political motivation, and any reform under this framework drives the Muslim society to raise another authoritative religious leader like Khomeini.

Cumulatively, the revivalist religious approach is a reform in favor of religious authority to strengthen the religio-political identity, and to resurrect the supposed “old days of the Islamic empire.” All these represent the difficulty of defining the term “Islamism” in the related literature.

The “essentially contested” nature of the concept of Islamism has been reflected in all the energy spent on discussing how to define it ... a great variety of Islamist typologies have been suggested. In addition to simplistic distinctions between “radical/moderate” or “violent/peaceful” Islamism, it is possible to identify a range of much more sophisticated typologies such as resistance/revolutionary/reformist Islamism (Robinson, 2007), Islahi-Ikhwani/Jihadi-Ikhwani/Islah-salafi/Jihadi-salafi Islamism (Utvik, 2011); reformist/revolutionary/societal/spiritual Islamism (Yavuz, 2003); Third Worldist/Neo-Third Worldist Islamism (Strindberg and Wärn, 2005); Statist/Non-Statist Islamism (Volpi and Stein, 2015), Salafist Jihadi/Ikhwani Islamism (Lynch, 2010), or mainstream/irredentist jihadi/doctrinaire jihadi Islamism (Gerges, 2005). (Valbjørn 2017, pp. 52–54)

As it is discussed in section 2.2, there is an intellectual dilemma concerning the passiveness of religion peculiarly in Shiism. In the academic terminology of religious studies, “reformists” is a general term to address any endeavor changing the de facto religious situation. In this sense, religious reformation is an effort to bring a given religion from its actual reality to its desired ideal position. The dilemma comes out when the issue reaches “the ideal position.” The intellectual or institutional struggle with the religious passiveness could be oriented in two thoroughly opposite sides; one is going to make the religion an active socio-political factor in favor of modernity, and the other wants an active religious ideology to confront modernity. Religious intellectualism in the 1960 s and 1970 s belonged to the latter. In fact, Ahmad Kasravi was an exception in Shiite reformation history.¹

¹ Kasravi’s religious reform plan was also exceptional in the sense of being relatively vague, paradoxical, and arbitrary. As a crucial example, his central idea of *Pākdini* accuses all religions to be intolerant, while the same idea does not seem to be so. *Pākdini* has a tone as the universalist claim or an alternative to all religions. Kasravi considers *Pākdini* as the religion of salvation, and the only way of happiness, which can confront both materialism and Sufism. His radical emphasis on the fundamentality of science along with his ideas of pure religion seems to be an arbitrary combination of the adherence to science and the rejection of materialism in order to make his *Pākdini* possible (Kasravi 1944a). *Pākdini* overlaps religious and mystical traditions with the confidence to nullify both as a purist movement (Kasravi 1943), while the very idea of *Pākdini* also seems to be purist. The collective termination of all religions is the ultimate end of his *Pākdini*. Accordingly, his *Pākdini* is not tolerant and has a totalitarian feature; *Pākdini* aims to cancel all religions by creating an inclusive meta-religion as *Pākdini*. Kasravi (1944b) degrades all mentioned religions and spiritual doctrines as useless and even harmful to the life of human beings. The totality in the gestalt of his *Pākdini*

The complexity of debate concerning Shiite history is that the Shiite quietism or its inactiveness is not the whole Shia phenomenon. The history of Shia Islam as a minority of the broad Muslim community proves that the Shiite will to the power has been woven in its Shiite quietism through standing in opposition side of the Sunni Caliphate in the early Islamic era. In this sense, the image of Shiism as a madhhab against tyranny with strong rejection of all illegitimate forms of government except that of infallible Imams is just part of the truth.

But the emphasis laid on political activism and opposition to tyranny as central themes of Shi'ite belief and practice has itself obscured the equally basic and historically dominant commitment of the Twelver Shi'a to political quietism. That activism and quietism have, in a sense, co-existed in a state of tension within Shi'ism is not, in itself, an egregious contradiction. Religious movements commonly embrace mutually contradictory attitudes, and attempts to classify them along the lines of simple dichotomies (such as 'activist' or 'quietist') are seldom very successful. (McEoin 1984, p. 18)

To clarify the mentioned dilemma, it should be pointed out that, on one side, some reformists wanted to modernize Shia Islam like Ahmad Kasravi. On the other side, some "reformists" aimed to alter the conservative element of Shiite clerical tradition, i.e., Shiite initial quietism and deliberately avoiding of politics during the occultation of the last infallible Imam, with a revolutionary interpretation of Shiism like what Ruhollah Khomeini did to Shia Islam in 1979. It seems the Pahlavi conservatism, observed both kinds as a barrier to its modernization. In conclusion, the conservative Pahlavi discourse in politics preferred a similar counterpart with the same conservative function and characteristics in the religious realm. However, the Pahlavi way of ruling neglects its own revolutionary modernization. These revolutionary reforms include the emancipation of women under Reza Shah in 1936, giving women the right to vote by the removal of "women's traditional Shiite Islamic legal disabilities" under Mohamad Reza Shah in 1963 (Bostom 2009, para. 2). Moreover, the White Revolution can be considered as a fundamental transitioning plan to change a feudal country into the industrial era, followed by rapid economic development which raises the public expectation from the monarchy. Let us not forget that the clerical authority took temporal advantage of some of the cultural reform despite its relative weakness in the Pahlavi monarchy. For example, after Reza Shah's unveiling campaign in early 1936, the government put pressure on the religious minorities like Bahais

remains no room for religious tolerance. Similarly, his vision on Shiism varies between nullification and reform. Nevertheless, his ideas on politics and religion will be discussed in a separate work as a dedicated monograph to him and Mohammad Ali Foroughi together.

and Jews in order to ease the Islamic pressure on itself; taking a pro-Islamic position after being accused of opposing Islam.

To assuage its critics and prove its Islamic credentials, the government resorted to: early in 1936, all Baha'i officers in the army were dismissed on the direct orders of the Shah ... Jews were systematically removed from the Customs Administration and other government offices. (M. Amanat 2012, p. 28)

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that controversy of the bill of 1936 also had its effect on officials. Homayoun indicates that Reza Shah, himself, had been shocked when he saw his royal family without the Islamic veil. He infers that Reza Shah made the historical decision to push the traditional society forward despite his own personal preferences as an Eastern man. "Within the Reza Shah, the despotic-benevolent-enlightened 'self' prevailed the manly-traditional-bigoted 'self' (*nāmūs-parast*) and made a step forward which is still out of our perception due to its greatness and intensity" (Homayoun 2009a, p. 28). That is why Ghasemi names the Pahlavi policy as *defensive modernization* instead of the popular label of *forceful modernization*. Ghasemi illustrates the precedence of feminine demands to be liberated from Sharia laws between the Constitutional Revolution and the emancipation of 1936. He lightens the excessive social restrictions which occasionally forced the Pahlavi monarchy to step back from its modernist standpoint (Ghasemi n.d.-a). Unlike the widespread assumption of his imitation from Turkey to emancipate Iranian women, it seems that "the visit of the King and Queen of Afghanistan to Iran in 1928 (without the veil) that encouraged Reza Shah to move quicker with the abolition of the veil in Iran" (A. Ansari 2013, p. 6).

Since all the historical borders in our human experience have an intimate and meaningful correlation together, it is not possible to analyze the Iranian monarchical conservatism without saying anything about the kind of offensive Shiite conservatism which occurred in the Iranian political atmosphere after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. There are lots of books, articles, and speeches to convince that when a monarchical conservatism ended to a Shiite one, it is clear evidence to devaluate the former. One of the desired argumentation is as follows: political authority is, in itself, a regressive phenomenon. Therefore, there is no considerable difference between monarchical conservatism and Shiite one. To rephrase it, they deny any differences between Pahlavi conservatism and Khomeini conservatism. The current thesis acknowledges the inevitability of the political

authority as a part of the common characteristics of human beings and consequently founds its argument based on this axiom and eventually in favor of a benevolent liberal-conservative policy.

4.1.2 Ancient Iranian Conservatism was Relatively Tolerant as a Bureaucratic Political Authority Toward Religious Diversities

We have seen a familiar phenomenon in the historical process of genesis of all kinds of political systems from ancient till now. There is a pattern in the relationship between authority and toleration, i.e., the more authoritarian body leads to the less tolerating policy. A religious factor plays a vital role to build the form of connection between political authority and religious orbit; the tolerating nature of paganism and the intolerable future of monotheism. In this regard, combining monotheistic intolerance with an authoritative political system makes a united form of institutional oppression. As a remarkable example, the earlier Roman Empire tried to unify its religious doctrine by stepping back from the previous pluralistic one, which allowed people “to continue to worship their pagan gods as well.” When the empire raised to the level of deity and being worshipped by their subjects, then a clear tendency appeared to create an official religion through Christian monotheism. The same story occurred with the Sasanian Empire when Zoroastrian monotheism captured the political sphere and raised its influence on the Persian Kingship. Although, merely a mutual connection between the Iranian kingship and Zoroastrianism does not imply the Zoroastrianized kingship in the Sassanid era. In other words, the religious roots of the Iranian kingship do not lead necessarily to a religious kingship. Even the early Sasanian kings “widely assumed to have been motivated by strong religious sentiments, and to have initiated reforms that eventually led to profound changes in the character of the Zoroastrian religion” (S. Stewart et al. 2008, p. 7). The transformation of royal titles from “king” to “king of kings” to “the divine Mazdayasnian king of the Iranians whose seed is from the gods” demonstrates a new identity for the Sasanian state and emphasizes the importance of both kingship and the divine right of the king to rule (p. 2). However, the Sasanian monarch became protector and propagator of Zoroastrianism, and orthodox Zoroastrianism had united the state and religion by sacral kingship. Therefore, the Sasanian Empire and orthodox Zoroastrian doctrine found an intimate connection with each other. Eventually, the

Zoroastrian high priest appointed any member of the Sasanid family as the chosen person for kingship by Ahura Mazda (Choksy 1988). The Sasanian Empire began with tolerance (Haldon 1990) and ended up with the opposite characteristics.

The early Sasanian kings are widely assumed to have been motivated by strong religious sentiments, and to have initiated reforms that eventually led to profound changes in the character of the Zoroastrian religion. ... That the current understanding of Sasanian piety is not unproblematic is suggested, for instance, by the fact that Shapur I (240-272 CE), who is widely held to have been a staunch Zoroastrian, welcomed the non-Zoroastrian Mani to his court, and apparently accorded him impressive privileges. (S. Stewart et al. 2008, p. 9)

Earlier, the Sasanian kings welcomed the leader of a religious minority group at that time, and later they suppressed him and his followers. While the early Sasanian kings could be considered as more tolerant and pluralist rulers, the late kings became the instrument of a dominant interpretation of Zoroastrianism. Though, some scholars suggest that despite excessive involvement of Zoroastrian priests in public affairs, “religious administration was an important dimension of the total system ... it is reasonable ... to suppose that the organization of the Zoroastrian priesthood corresponded to the secular structure of the state” (Morony 1982, p. 2). Despite the longstanding influence of the Sasanian bureaucratic framework, which kept its influential presence during the next centuries, the eventual failure came out of the imbalance between religion and politics.

During the Umayyad caliphate, *among* the influences which were shaping the governing institution of Islam, were in the earlier period the Hellenistic, and towards its end the Sasanian, traditions of government. In both of these traditions, the political institution was dominated by the millennial [*sic*] concept of the “Universal Empire” and the *Pan-basileus*² ... there is no room for doubt that the ‘Abbāsid caliphate was even more strongly influenced by the Sasanian form of the “Universal Empire” concept and its consequent modalities. Indeed, its influence went much further; for the later “juristic” expositions of the Caliphate are reaffirmations of the principle of the “Universal Empire” in an Islamic guise or disguise. (Gibb 1955, pp. 16, 17)

² As Bernard Lewis (1988) explains, *Basileus* is a Greek term and title that has expressed different types of monarchs. In English, it is likely perceived as *king* or *emperor*. The title is applicable to rulers in ancient Greece and the Byzantine emperors. “In principle, there could be only one khalifa one supreme sovereign. This was perceived as a universal, ... an imperial, title, an Islamic equivalent of the ... Hellenistic-Christian idea of the pan-basileus, the “all-king,” presiding over a single, universal empire” (p. 46).

Rashidian (1978) indicates that under the Sassanid era, the religious unification was motivated by the necessity of empowerment in front of Rome and Christian dominance. The result was the intensity of clerical ownership, wealth, and influence (pp. 77, 78). From a Marxist analysis, Rashidian explains the ancient function of bureaucracy as the best and the most stable way of exploitation and dominance. Rashidian considers the unified expression of the King and Zoroastrianism as a mutual need of support to preserve social, political, and economic possessorship. In this regard, he interprets the relative religious pluralism under the Achaemenids in the heterogeneous texture of the empire. The ideological wholeness could secure both political and economic unification in the Sasanian Empire. That is why, as Rashidian explains, the monarchic and the clerical power were in permanent conflictions. He traces the “ruthless competition” between the King and the religious establishment into a realm of political stability. The weak political authority leads to increasing clerical dominance. Coherently, he considers the power of the king superior to the religious clergies. The king is who is entitled to the divine grace, and the king is who is chosen to rule on behalf of God (pp. 124, 127, 128). Moreover, the religious pluralism of Achaemenids provided more efficient control over them and their representatives in the state. The rapid alteration of the official religion in this era is a result of balancing power between them. Rashidian infers that the dependency of the clerical establishment on the state was a sustained relationship between them. The only independent religious bureaucracy from state bureaucracy was Christianity in the medieval period. “The church was almost the only bureaucratic institution in medieval Europe.” Therefore, the fragility, as a substantial characteristic, belonged to religion, not a monarchy. *The heavenly was in a permanent need to the earthly.* “In this sense, all religions were the state religion, and they had no autonomous existence without fundamental dependency on the state bureaucracy” (pp. 129, 131, 132). Relevantly, he considers the monarchy as only an ideological existence that worked as an ornament for the institutional existence of the state bureaucracy (pp. 191–193). However, the question of political authority remained partly unanswered in the Marxist philosophy of history. Is the state intrinsically despotic, corruptive, and discriminative? Is the monarchy an inherently deviated existence or there could be some grounds to divide it between basic form and deprived form? It seems that historical class struggle to overthrow the then order of authority has led to a new form of authority with the same or worse deficiencies. For example, the Mazdakite justice demands against the tyrannous Sassanid order was a peasant movement that ended up with a new form of authority as a combination of

peasantry and bureaucracy. Rashidian affirms that the justice demands of Mazdakism³ were not authentic due to its resemblance with state bureaucracy or its subordination to the state ideology. He emphasized that the state is intrinsically ideologic and dominant. Nevertheless, it seems that justice, liberty, and authority are all the same attributions of the man's will to the power. The question is whether the bureaucratic order is inevitable or can be passed to the next phase of human progression. In this case, the political authority is needed to be modalized through the non-bureaucratic era of the future.

Concepts shape all of our understanding, and the conceptual border between every two words could lead to a clear perception or a vague misunderstanding. Accordingly, it needs to mention the difference between political authority and authoritarian body politic on one hand and also the difference between the religious element of the Iranian kingship⁴ and a dominated kinship by an official religion on the other hand. First of all, the religious justification of Iranian kingship is part of the mythology and ancient collective archetype of history in Iran. In this regard, there should be an awareness of the theoretical distinction between

³ Mazdak (died c. 524 or 528) was a Zoroastrian *mobad* (priest) who gained influence during the reign of the Sasanian emperor Kavadh I. He claimed to be a prophet of Ahura Mazda and instituted communal possessions and social welfare programs. Mazdak is considered a proto-socialist.

⁴ There is an interpretation about the hidden ground of sanctifying kings on the basis of the mythological history of Iran. Ghazi Moradi (2017) indicates that the sanctification of the king in ancient and traditional societies "was a passive way to oppose arbitrariness of the despotic kings and an effort to diminish it" (pp. 69, 70). The author used "dual necessity" to describe the double function of sacred kingship as a pre-Modern solution to confront the dominant political power and simultaneously obey it; we cannot change our situation to be subordinated, so we act as if the unpleasant circumstances is not as we perceive it. What is called "passive opposition" is a stoical behavior or kind of political stoicism (which was an ancient Greek school of philosophy teaches to be indifferent to the fortune and misfortune in life). The author also compares the previous passive way of dealing with despotism to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905, which was the first and the last constructive Iranian movement claiming the right to choose their own destiny as a nation. The mentioned hypothesis is considerable, but making a great confrontation between the religious grounds of Iranian kingship and the constitutional demands, or the active response to the problem of absolute power, is not a completely justifiable position. The contra example is the very liberal revolution of 1905 which conciliated between the respected place of the king in the body politic and the demand for a responsible government to the citizens.

mythos⁵ and logos in the history of philosophy. Consequently, an attempt to analyze it under a rational framework could lead to misunderstanding. Under the light of pure reason, a given myth is considered as unreasonable. Therefore, it will be concluded that the sacred grace of monarchy which comes from God, is not apparent to whom and by which competence can be granted (H. Katouzian 2003). *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* is an analysis of a tradition that is more symbolic and should be assessed by its function more than its analytical meaning if it has any. The irrationality of some theoretical grounds of monarchy does not mean that the entire political form is also the same. Although, there is a recognizable concern to flow the partly irrational elements to the way of ruling. Nevertheless, finding the root of arbitrary power in the very theoretical basis of monarchy is a selecting use of reason and also has many counterfactual cases, peculiarly in the Middle East; the rational theoretical ground (the nation's will) under the rational title (Republic) which ended to the highest oppression, tyranny, and plunder.

There is no escape from an authority when we discuss politics or, more importantly, when we want to build a body politic. Authority could be democratic or not, but the very authority is inevitable. Political power is all we face, struggle, obey, or analyze, and there is no sense to discuss political power without accepting the existence of authority as the most ancient phenomenon in human history. Thirdly, kingship was the only form of body politic in Iran from the ancient period till the contemporary time before 1979. There was always a connection, and consequently a tension or cooperation, with the religious establishment and the monarchic power. The very theoretical basis of the monarchy in Iran is inspired and waved with the idea of religion. In other words, the body of the kingdom and the institution of the religion were always tied together. The mentioned mixed phenomenon is something other than a subordinate kingship to religious authority, and there is a long way from one to the other in the sense of the fundamental political alteration.

⁵ In ancient Greek, there was no gap between myth and reality. It was perceived thoroughly different from what we nowadays name as "myth." In ancient Greece, as Morgan (2004) illustrates, mythos was a reveal of reality or part of the reality which was known to human beings. In this sense, mythos is the main root of our universe and our existence. However, we understand "myth" as exposure to something which is not true. In ancient times, myth was an authentic way to recreate collective memories and the past. History as an almost provable fact was considered along with myth. In those times, myth was creating history and history was mythical. On the contrary, the Socratic method is a form of argumentative dialogue and Platonic teachings developed philosophy as opposed to poetry and specifically to that rhetoric of sophistic figures like Protagoras who is mentioned in one of Plato's dialogues. In other words, logos as an essential source of philosophy differentiated with mythos mainly by Plato and Platonic tradition.

The consolidation of church and state is also the subject of Michael Alram's contribution. He discusses the importance of the power and identity of the early Sasanian Kings as witnessed through coinage. He charts the progression of the royal title from 'king' to 'king of kings' to 'the divine Mazdayasnian king of the Iranians whose seed is from the gods'. In this way the monarch creates 'a new identity for his dynasty as well as for the Sasanian state'. Both obverse and reverse of these coins emphasise the importance of kingship and the divine right of the king to rule. The reverse of Ardashir's coins emphasise the link between religion and kingship with the depiction of a fire altar placed on a royal throne. (S. Stewart et al. 2008, p. 7)

Iranian history is almost equal to the history of kingship, and it is recognizable that the importance of kingship in Iran could not detach from the idea that the king has a divine right to rule (S. Stewart et al. 2008). This idea does not make monarchy a religious form of sovereignty. Otherwise, there would be no meaning for the political struggle between the royal court and the religious establishment in the history of monarchy as a worldwide experience from the ancient period until the current era. Supposedly, with the modern and contemporary view on the ancient history or terms, "the divine right of the king" is not a ground of a kind of political legitimacy by the 21st-century criterion. Nowadays, all the ancient rulers, whether they ruled upon slaves or free people, are considered despots, and it is hard to find a new theoretical aspect in tracing the divinity of monarchy into a "functional" myth (H. Katouzian 1981).

4.1.3 The Failure of Pahlavi Conservatism: On the Contradictory and Self-destructive Heritage

Despite all wrong assessments, "the seemingly invincible Pahlavi regime remained structurally fragile" (Azimi 2008, p. 8), and the rapid downfall of the monarchy is rooted in its peculiar political form. The Pahlavi conservatism was impotent, contradictory, and ineffective to form a liberal culture with its desired attachment to both the glorious Persian history and the post-Islamic era which the Shah always wanted to be the representative of the supposed Iranian continuation in the history. As it is discussed mostly in section 2.2.3 on the clarification of ties between political Shiism, anti-Western intellectualism and the Pahlavi nationalist ideology, it is undeniable that the Ancien Régime took refuge to the camp of its opponents by appealing only to the past, i.e., the Iranian history, without creating a coherent discourse for its own contemporaries, peculiarly the middle class. The same cultural policy of Reza Shah, the glorification of pre-Islamic era, continued during Mohammad Reza Shah to form a passionate secular nationalism.

As Meir Litvak reminds us, “this form of nationalism served as an instrument of legitimization to compensate for the regime’s loss of religious legitimacy and to mitigate the appeal of radical ideologies to the emerging urban mass society” (Litvak 2017, p. 15). In this regard, Alvandi (2018) points a fundamental challenge of the Shah to draw a governmental counter-discourse in front of the Islamist-Marxist ideology. However, the result of the discourse of Pahlavism as “an attempt to co-opt the language of *Gharbzadegi*” was not satisfactory to form a counterideological native philosophy in front of the anti-Western coalition against the government. In fact, as Alvandi explains, the official ideology and all the speculative endeavors of the Shah and the Pahlavi elites to represent a convincing explanation of the official ideology was “incredibly contradictory and convoluted” (Stanford Iranian Studies Program 2018). All the official emphasis on *the Great Civilization* came out of the similar anti-Western ideology which paradoxically aimed to actualize a double plan; to westernize Iran and to promote a nativist ideology. By appealing to this paradoxical approach, the empty and impoverished monarchial discourse of the Shah tries to justify the Westernization of Iran and simultaneously use the anti-Western nativist theories in order to justify the Pahlavi autocracy. His opponents just took a further step; developing the self-destructive governmental logic to devaluate the Shah as a Western ally, the most important one, in the Middle East.

Regarding the ineffective domestic propaganda of the Shah, it should be mentioned that the 2500 year celebration of the Persian Empire in Persepolis in October 1971 was a remarkably successful international propaganda of the Pahlavi monarchy as “a global projection of Pahlavism” and “the idea of the resurrection of Iranian greatness.” However, the Iranians at the same time could not recognize and acknowledge their actual respectful position in the eyes of all those international guests in Persepolis. The people were living by all of their mistrust, misunderstanding, and lack of self-confidence to realize their own controlled participation in the process of development which was supposed to be founded on Iranian pride, confidence, and power. In other words, the Pahlavi monarchy during the 1960 s and 1970 s was a prominent international actor and simultaneously was an impotent domestic one. As it is well articulated in an American document on 19 January 1977, “the Shah’s future dilemma is that as living standards improve and as increasing number of Iranians go abroad for work or study, more pressure will be generated on the regime to share power with the newly educated and recently affluent” (Byrne 2005, p. 48). Kardavani, former secretary of the anti-Shah opposition group named *the Confederation of Iranian Students*, blames the Shah to ridicule intellectuals in his rhetoric and to

run the country in an autocratic way with some subordinated noble technocrats who held distance to engage in politics (BBC Persian 2019b).

Projecting the remarkable plane of national prestige in the Persepolis celebration was not aligned with the official distaste of the “Western” political liberalism. In fact, both the Shah and the anti-Shah opposition were on the same side to refuse the liberal values in politics. That is why the anti-democratic feature of the Pahlavi conservatism was being used by its anti-democratic opposition who aimed to actualize their ideological struggle with the Shah under the title of human rights. The ideological discourse of human rights undermined the narrative of Pahlavi from “Iran” as an official concept of a civilized country that was being promoted to both Iranians and the world.

The human rights revolution of the 1970’s was profoundly damaging for the Shah ... The issue of Human Rights was instrumentalized as a weapon ... against [him] ... [the] Shah was equably sensitive about these human rights criticism ... he saw Iran in his language as a “Great Civilization,” and he imagined Iran as a civilized country. (Stanford Iranian Studies Program 2018)

The Shah’s counter policy was to promote his governmental narrative of human rights which was presented in Tehran at the United Nations’ International Conference on Human Rights which Iran hosted. It seems that some parts of the proclamation as the official results of the conference are similar to the desired ideas of the Shah with his constant emphasis that economic development is the prerequisite of democracy or proposing the third-generation human rights, i.e., “solidarity rights” with the assertion on the right to peace (Momtaz n.d.). In the conference, Alvandi (2018) indicates, that the Shah represented his desired idea, i.e., sovereignty as the basis and as the main prerequisite of human rights.

In his international interviews, the Shah spoke with a more convincing tone that Iran hopefully would overtake many western countries like France and Britain in the next two decades as “one of the five most flourishing and prosperous nations of the world” (A. M. Ansari 2007, p. 232). Moreover, the Shah had woven the anti-British sentiment with his attack on democratic rights while investing in the public nationalistic emotions. The failure of the Pahlavi conservatism to build a comprehensive liberal discourse led to a vacuum of public meaning, and such empty public spaces are prone to be filled by narrow, intolerant, and totalitarian alternatives. The anti-Western aspect of the Pahlavi conservatism becomes clearer by assessing his claim about the near “decline of the West” which is also used with the Islamist tone after 1979 by Khomeini and the current supreme

leader. The originality of the idea is granted to the wide spectrum of the anti-Western philosophy in the West. In fact, the monarchic regime, the anti-Shah opposition, and the theocratic regime took it from the West. Ironically, the Shah accepts that we cannot talk about the West as an entity. “The West is divided, very divided. You cannot talk about the West as a whole” (AP Archive 2015, 00:08:18–00:08:46). However, the West is not a homogenous and harmonized entity in international diplomacy, and the West is an entity in his ideology of autocratic monarchy. In an interview with Peter Snow on 29 January 1974, the Shah even claimed that Iranians do not want the type of democracy in the West.

This is not necessarily the case because we Iranians have a custom which is exactly the opposite of this. The people and the Shah of Iran are so close to each other that they consider themselves to be members of one family. I think that the people of Iran respect their Shah in the same way that children of Iranian families respect their fathers. (A. M. Ansari 2007, p. 232)

As Ansari (2007) adds, “democracy had been definitively replaced by a paternalistic monarch who knew what was best for his people” (p. 232). That is why the Shah believed that journalists could criticize His Majesty, but he did not think that they would do it (thekinolibrary 2017a). In other words, the Pahlavi conservatism failed mostly due to its utopian imagination from politics. All the predictions of the Shah about his land and the West has a tone of paranoia and prophecy. The over self-confidence of the Pahlavi conservatism had a devastating backlash, which resulted in the lack of self-confidence in the critical moments of 1978–79. To justify the Pahlavi conservatism in the everlasting form of the “enlightened despot,” the Shah constantly refers to the past, the authenticity of the Iranian history, and the heritage of “our ancestors” as a source of inspiration and pride. Similarly, he emphasizes in the first page of his memoirs in exile, “no nation can live only by appealing to its past, and no nation can be sustained without the attention to its past. The nation without dependence and attachment to its past will necessarily vanish from the earth” (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-a, p. 5). A similar teaching is articulated by the differentiation between positive nationalism and negative nationalism. The first, i.e., the Shah’s discourse, has an accurate and determined plan to develop the country, while the latter only complains about the defects without any overall project. “Everyone can ruin and destroy, but just a few can found and preserve” (M. R. S. Pahlavi n.d.-b, p. 29). The Shah always emphasized on forefathers and the spiritual tradition of Iran.

Obviously, for us, there is absolutely no room for establishing an empire through military conquest, which is, out of the question ... ridiculous. So to regain the greatness

of Iran could only be done in the ad human aspect of our past to revive it and to take the best out of the thought of our forefathers, and being a prosperous country, a happy society based on social justice, but is or today's creation and marrying today with the past, presenting something for what for ourselves and if it is appealing for others to look at. (thekinolibrary 2017a)

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi asserts in the interview that the contemporary Iranian creation is the result of the spiritual marriage between today and the past which gave birth to something “for ourselves” which can be appealing for others to consider. With all these considerations, it is fair and factual to claim that the Shah of Iran was an iconic symbol of the simplistic Iranian perception of the tradition. Ayatollah Khomeini came out of the same tradition and it should be already understood that the tradition is not a homogenous historical phenomenon and cannot be used as the only source of legitimacy. Peculiarly, it is right about Iranian history, which is not only a heterogeneous tradition but also a disintegrated and divergent one with many major gaps in the past. His appeal to the tradition is similar to the ideas of Edmund Burke at first glance.

As it is discussed in section 1.2 about the relation of religion with conservatism in Burke's thoughts, the Shah similarly aimed to seek the division between religion and politics, to keep the respectful position of the religious establishment, to transcendence the sovereignty by appealing to the spiritual wisdom of ancestors, to attain loyalty based on his desired character as the modern Shah of Shia, to avoid destructive changes and subversive reforms, to sanctify the Pahlavi monarchy and eventually to glorify the ancestral inheritance. His desired self-presentation was in accord with the mentioned arbitrary mixture of ideas as the pronouncement of an unborn Great Civilization. “The Shah presented himself as a modernizer to the elite and the middle class, and as a traditional ruler to the masses” (Chehabi 2013, p. 35). The only problem is that “the past” in the British heritage is not the same as the Iranian one. Moreover, Edmund Burke, in his turn, was both monarchist and constitutionalist, whose conservative philosophy had relied on the rich British tradition of constitutionalism. Scruton (2011) explains the meaning of authenticity when we discuss “the idea tradition”; it is a form of social knowledge, not merely a custom, or a ritual.

Modern liberals tend to scoff at the idea of tradition. All traditions, they tell us, are ‘invented’, implying that they can therefore be undone ... A real tradition is not an invention; it is the unintended *by-product* of invention, which also makes invention possible. (Scruton 2011, p. 31)

However, there should be comprehensive precedence in the past, so that makes it possible to refer, rely on, and invest. Conversely, the Shah and the Pahlavi elites had nullified the official discourse of the government by greeting the antagonism between the East and the West in an ideological manner. The lack of successful constitutionalism made the Pahlavi anti-Western attitude a cooperative factor in favor of anti-Shah opposition. The very understanding of the Shah about the past and the present is a variety of paradoxes and simplemindedness. “We might present some kind of new solution between capitalism and communism.” The Shah means “on the social side and the new materialistic philosophy,” and he continues “but we can also present to you the old philosophy of our forefathers which we think is beautiful and from which we can learn” (thekinolibrary 2017a). In general, the nationalistic historicity is usually incapable of forming a comprehensive account of the continuation and discontinuation. It is prone to express itself as an innovative force in history and a departure from miseries of the past, and simultaneously, it tries to represent itself as the sole connection of the past to the present (Keyder 1988). Pahlavi conservatism failed to form a cogent and coherent national identity. However, the problem of nationalism does not lie in defining “others.” From a conservative perspective, nationalism has no inherent characteristic of negative “othering,” and it is different from Islamism in this regard. Islamism is intrinsically incapable of forming a tolerant “otherness,” while nationalism has the possibility to propose a prosperous collective identity which defines “others” in an integrating way.

This process has always been hostage to the need to bridge identities between the extreme, divergent and contentious dualities of: Islamism and nationalism, pre-Islamic and post Islamic history, pro-Western and anti-imperialist approaches – to say nothing of the need to reconcile with, and accommodate, modernity itself in all its forms. (Saleh and Worrall 2015, p. 18)

Mere the complexity of the Shiite tradition in Iran can prove the suppositiousness of the spiritual teachings of the Shah and its detachment from history. Being inspired by Cassirer’s criticism on romantic spirituality, the Shah was not aware that it is precisely his own “metaphysical spiritualism that paved the way for the most uncouth and uncompromising materialism in political life” (Cassirer 1946, p. 141). In this regard, the Pahlavi conservatism overlaps with romanticism and lacked the coherency and accuracy of the liberal conservatism in the West. Put another way, Pahlavi conservatism sometimes represented itself as a poetic attitude to politics, and when an alleged despot wants to be a poet, the outcome

could be anything other than a reasonable political discourse. Liberal conservatism is a philosophy of the now and wants to build a lawful benevolence based on both ancestral inheritance and human knowledge. Therefore, conservatism, as a political philosophy, has a clear distinction with revivalism, romanticism, and any tendency to recreate the past in the present. The teachings which were sponsored officially during the 1960 s and 1970 s as an arbitrary combination of the Islamic traditionalism of Hossein Nasr and monarchic pulpits of Ahmad Fardid cannot be identified as conservatism.

The differentiation between conservatism and romanticism should always be noticed in the assessment of conservative accounts. Moreover, the Pahlavi conservatism internalizes a fundamental paradox under the form of duality between rural authenticity and urban alienation.⁶ In fact, the monarchy pursued a double and antagonist cultural policy to modernize the public sphere in the cities and to glorify the remained traditional lifestyle in the peasantry. Menahem Merhavi names this policy “the exoticizing of rural Iran.” Merhavi indicates that Pahlavi elites represented the Iranian countryside as “the nation in its purity.” In this account, the perils of promoting this kind of “authenticity” and the self-destructive official notion of Iranianness, which contains both naivety and genuineness, became an unintended source for anti-Pahlavi motivation which “had gained momentum from 1963 onwards.”

Pahlavi elites presented the Iranian countryside and its population as representing the nation in its purity, uncontaminated by modern Western technology and ways of life. Glorification of ‘authentic’ rural life was a manifestation of the romantic element in the Pahlavi perception of Iranian national revival, as the awakening of a sleeping beauty ... The fact that the countryside was less advanced technologically contributed to modern thinkers’ perception of its authenticity. Since the rural peoples often lived in conditions resembling those of Iranian ancestors, they were believed to carry ancestral qualities and uniqueness in other areas as well. (Merhavi 2017, pp. 168, 169)

Not all coherencies and consistencies bring a triumph, as the anti-Shah ideology had not any such elements, but a discourse of a benevolent autocracy should have the effectiveness at least. The challenge in every undemocratic regime is

⁶ The ostensible mismanagement of the long-term consequences of the White Revolution reminds us of what Rashidian (1978) articulates about the history of state bureaucracy, capital, private property, and the deformed transition of Iran from each plane of progression to another one in accord with the Marxist categorization of human history. “The private property partly found its own form in the history of Oriental societies, but it remained politically not institutional. The situation of its progression was not enough to construct a new society, but quite enough to paralyze the old society” (p. 28).

that their discourse cannot be productive unless the system starts the process of democratization in the light of its authority to mobilize the consequences. As it is discussed in section 3.3.2 about the pretexts and causes of the downfall of the monarchy, it should be pointed out that the despotic political culture in Iran and the very character of the Shah along with the stubborn envy of his opposition made an atmosphere of mistrust between all political actors. The worst one concerning the government was the lack of confidence between the Shah and all the candidates who were prominent and capable of bringing Iran out of discontents. Ali Amini (1981), the former prime minister, articulated this complex of mistrust in his political memoirs (pp. 96, 102–127). According to the explicit political sense of Amini, all of then and former politicians were sure that if the Shah survived the crisis, then the first victims would be themselves. The culture of isolating nobles (in Persian: *Nokhbeh-koshi*) formed the uncertainty between political elites to stay, fight and help the Shah. For, they had a reasonable doubt about the mutual support and any accountable promises from the Shah. Some scholars like Ansari analyze the roots of Pahlavi autocracy in their desired nationalism which launched on the eve of Reza Shah's reign. When his republican campaign failed, he prevailed on his hesitation and chose a monarchy with a new dynastic discourse.

Reza Shah now emphatically pursued the monarchical route, developing a thesis which would later be extended by his son that, without the dynasty, the nation would cease to exist. It was a subtle shift in the doctrine of nationalism which placed the dynasty on a par with if not superior to the nation. Far from being the first servant of the state, Reza Shah was becoming a prerequisite for its continued existence. The inherent contradiction implicit in the juxtaposition of a traditional monarchy with the institutions of the modern state, and the desire to implement a legal-rational model of government, would be resolved through loyalty to the dynasty and the development of a dynastic nationalism which would incorporate these diverse trends. (A. M. Ansari 2007, pp. 50, 51)

The Pahlavi nationalism could not dissimilate the old problem of political despotism. The traditional relation of the ruler with his bureaucrats and with his people was woven with a rapid modernization of public life without awareness of the importance of liberal values from both sides. In other words, the political conservatism of Pahlavi was a kind of liberal autocracy and neglected the democratic aspects of liberalism, and the ideology of anti-Shah opposition was anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and full of the sense of resentment with the then political structure. The acknowledgment of the vitality of emotions in politics is part of conservative rationality. The resentment, i.e., “hatred and anger,” according

to Adam Smith (1976), “are the greatest poison to the happiness of a good mind” (pp. 34–40). The convulsion and the destructiveness, like the upheaval of 1979, are results of the lack of tranquility of Iranian minds in 1978–79. Nevertheless, the ignorance about the self, the others, and the meaning of the nation-state had been spreading on both sides. The autocratic way of representing Western values to the Iranians could be one pretext of the public frustration against those values. It is connected to the inconsistency of Pahlavi conservatism. “Thus in an age of republicanism, radicalism, and nationalism, the Pahlavis appeared in the eyes of the intelligentsia to favor monarchism, conservatism, and Western imperialism” (Abrahamian 1989, p. 17).

Mohammad Mosaddeq wrote in his memoirs that his cabinet had been overthrowing under the name of some excuses like national security and the imminent danger to the whole homeland. Regardless of Mosaddeq’s bitterness and his denial of defects in his policy, he indicated in the next phrase about the time when he was serving as the minister of finance in the cabinet of Ahmad Qavam. As a symptom of an autocratic politics, it is worth mentioning the remembrance of Mosaddeq (1980) that all of his opponents attacked his deeds in the Ministry of Finance by making a prologue to praise Reza Shah and Mosaddeq attacked them by appealing to the exact manner of praising the Shah firstly and devaluating his foes lately (p. 76). Ironically, the same Reza Shah (1971) expressed his sorrows and anger for the weakness of moral virtues in the people. He wishes that the characteristics of being superstitious, poor-spirited, and ignorant would be replaced by being enlightened, principled, and wise (p. 100). The mentioned Reza Shah memoirs belonged to a pre-coronation time when he served as *Sardār Sepah* or Commander-in-Chief of the Army in the last years of Ahmad Shah Qajar. However, the despotic political structure makes its own specific ruler, as if the personage is not the same before seizing power and after being entitled as the sovereign. All of the wishes of Reza Shah in his memoirs could only be actualized under a constitutional framework.

Similarly, both anti-Shah opposition figure from the National Front, Karim Sanjabi, and his former prime minister, Ali Amini, believed that the Shah had an envious feeling against the prominent and influential Prime Minister Ahmad Qavam. Both agreed that the liberation of Azerbaijan from its political crisis in 1946 was the victory of Qavam’s policy, but the Shah promoted it always as his own success. Sanjabi (1983) expresses that the Shah could not tolerate a person upper himself, i.e., a politician who is more powerful or more prominent than His Majesty (p. 90). That is why, according to Sanjabi, the Shah tried to push Qavam away from the political scene after 1946 and tried to isolate him and his newly-established Democratic Party.

During World War II, the three Allied powers had agreed that they would withdraw their occupation forces from Iran six months after the end of hostilities, but when that deadline came in early 1946, Stalin ignored it. Citing vague threats to Soviet security, he declared that the Red Army would remain in Iran's northern province of Azerbaijan. When Tudeh activists there proclaimed a People's Republic of Azerbaijan, he ordered his troops to prevent Iranian soldiers from entering the province to reestablish their authority. Soon a local militia emerged, flush with weapons from Moscow ... Prime Minister Ahmad Qavam, an exceptionally talented statesman, traveled to Moscow and managed to persuade Stalin to step back from the brink of confrontation. He withdrew his soldiers. (Kinzer 2003, pp. 65, 66)

The same story occurred about the White Revolution, which was the innovation of Sayyid Hassan Arsanjani (1922–1969)⁷ and Ali Amini. There were many controversial details in the process of pursuing land reform as a central section of the White Revolution. For example, Milani indicates the opinions of Abolhassan Ebtehaj (1899–1999)⁸ on his sophisticated idea of the taxation system that he proposed to maintain both reformed agriculture and a respected private property and his concerns about the future long-term capitalist development of Iran which was undermined by the then reform plan. All of Ebtehaj's assessments remained unnoticed by the Shah and Ali Amini (Milani 2012). On the other hand, Ali Amini (1981) complains in his memoirs that the actualized land reform was not the planned land reform designed by him and his expertise in the cabinet. However, the Shah had mostly a political motivation to launch the White Revolution as a promotion of his monarchy (Milani 2012). Homayoun believes that the Shah had no role in the early phases of the land reform and that he aimed to constitute his monarchic power on traditional conservative foundations contains the army, the clergies, and the landowners. Homayoun reminds us that the acceptance of such a reform came out of the increasing weakness of the Shah due to the pressure of the Kennedy administration and the political and economic crisis of 1960–61. However, Homayoun praised the Shah due to his further contribution to the mentioned reform by adding other elements like the women's right to vote and the movement to spread literacy all over Iran. At the same time, Homayoun (2009a) criticized the Shah due to his political tendency to use the White Revolution mainly as an instrument of empowering himself with some nonsense domestic propaganda.

⁷ Sayyid Hassan Arsanjani was a bureaucrat reformist and the minister of agriculture in the cabinet of Ali Amini during 1961–62.

⁸ Abolhassan Ebtehaj is a prominent figure in the economic history of Iran during the 1950 s and 1960 s. He was a banker, economic adviser, and one of the most important planners concerning the development of the Iranian banking system.

However, the Pahlavi despotism with all of its symptoms is not only a kind of Pahlavi phenomenon. Adhering to the liberal conservatism, which the current thesis is based on it, the vicious circle of despotism is antagonist cooperation between all political actors. The relationship between the Shah and Qavam is not a vice of only one side that is usually the side that has the upper hand. We have already discussed the similar mistrust and envy between Reza Shah and Teymūrtāsh. In accord with the liberal-conservative philosophy, *Nokhbeh-koshi* is not a one-sided political defect or moral depravity. In other words, the political culture of *Nokhbeh-koshi* is not an inherent characteristic rooted in the monarchic structure, as the Iranian despotism is not an inseparable and essential part of the Iranian monarchy. According to Homayoun (2009a), Ahmad Qavam as “the most prominent member of the old Iranian aristocracy” is also well-known for the suppression of almost all newspapers which had been used to publish before his premiership in 1942 (p. 215). The memoirs of Ali Amini are also important to rethink the failure of Pahlavi conservatism. Amini expresses his sorrows that in the last twenty-five years of the Pahlavi monarchy, Iranians lost the opportunity to build a nation-state. He asserts that in this duration, Iran had good technicians, good engineers, good doctors, but had no politicians. In this regard, Amini (1981) differentiates technocrats from politicians. “Technocrats execute the royal orders to reform, but politicians are bestowed with the political insight, [they are independent], and they are aware of their great task and all its consequences” (p. 103). In this regard, Amini suggested to the Shah that the Pahlavi monarchy needs to form its own politicians (*Rejāl-e Pahlavi*) and should be developed beyond technocrats, bureaucrats, and governmental elites. On another occasion, he tells the Shah with the tone of admonition that the politics of modernization and economic development must be able to continue after him (pp. 105, 127). However, the suggestion had some prerequisites like mutual trust between the Shah and politicians of the Pahlavi system that failed to occur in his reign.

The Pahlavi state under Mohammad Reza Shah was militarily strong but politically precarious; in terms of ideological power it remained particularly weak, unable to justify the Shah’s personalized rule in any terms other than professed dedication to socioeconomic reform. Its invocation of the Constitution as synonymous with monarchism, its appeal to the “imperial system” or other invented traditions, and its promise of a “great civilization” failed to furnish it with a sustainable ideological legitimacy. (Azimi 2008, p. 8)

The same feeling can be identified in the memoirs of Asadollah Alam (2001), concerning his loyalty and emotion to the Shah by describing him “tireless,”

when he complains that His Majesty sometimes does something out of its proper procedure and without informing Alam as the minister of the royal court. Alam ends the related phrase with his surprise at the Shah's deed and by quoting a famous Arabic proverb uttered firstly by Harun al-Rashid (766–809), the fifth 'Abbāsid Caliph; "the throne is infertile" (pp. 187, 188). It is vital to mention that the lack of politicians is not one-sided symptom roots only in the Pahlavi government, but even its national opposition had the same defect. Khalil Maleki in his letter to Mohammad Mosaddeq in February-March 1963 indicates that how envious emotions and dictatorial tendencies between members ruined his efforts, his *Niru-ye Sevom* (Third Force Party), and those who wanted to revive the National Front after the "coup" 1953. That is why, Maleki (1989) believes, the military forces in the Middle East are more successful because they are at least principled in general and the pious military officers have most of the political virtues; they are cooperative and disciplined, while the so-called national forces are hypocrite, envious and had no sense of solidarity to reach an actual goal (pp. 415–418). Similarly, Abolhassan Banisadr (1984) asserts that the National Front failed due to the hegemonic competition that everyone and every party wanted to dominate others.

The same criticism is expressed by Ahi when he articulates that there were only bureaucrats and technocrats during the Shah's reign and Iran had no politician. Ahi believes that Iranian bureaucrats under the Shah had no knowledge of the political norms. He mentions that the popularization of politics and the politicization of the people was the most dangerous moment for a country that is used to be governed by a small group of skilled elites. In other words, the rationalization of bureaucracy had postponed political liberalization for decades. Therefore, political opening without constructive precedence based on public experience led to a disruptive revolution other than a smooth transition. When the revolution is historically contextualized, it becomes clear that the lack of experience to manage the politicized public idea led to chaos, and the elite bureaucracy collapsed devastatingly. Not far to be expected, the Pahlavi elites remained in an impossible shock during the entire revolutionary period of 1978–79. The violent shake of 1979 became a permanent complex in Iranians, peculiarly in royalists, and remained part of the Pahlavi bureaucracy. It can be considered as a psychological ground of the apparent theoretical poverty and the practical passiveness in the Iranian monarchic discourse. The rapid downfall of the Pahlavi monarchy is also connected to the autocratic character of the system. Ahi explains that the decision-maker for many decades suddenly decided not to decide anymore. "The man who even appoints a senior official and had engaged himself in the smallest details of government, left the last cabinets of Iran by themselves" (KEYHAN.LONDON

ONLINE 2019). The detachment between the Shah and the executive body of the monarchy becomes clear according to the American document on 1 August 1978.⁹ It demonstrates that the Pahlavi bureaucrats became not only apolitical during the Shah's reign but also became envious that the Shah personalized the power and consequently all the problems concerning the nature of political power are only his own difficulties to be solved.

The Prime Minister and the Cabinet are doing virtually nothing about religious/political challenges and persist in the view that this is the Shah's and SAVAK's problem. Only the Shah himself and the Court Minister are concerned and time is passing. (Byrne 2005, p. 137)

The critique of Pahlavi conservatism from the viewpoint of religious and ethnic minorities is not at the center of the thesis. However, as Sanasarian (2000) expresses, the discourse of nationalism during the Pahlavi monarchy is being principally criticized due to its ideological inflexibility, its "homogenization", its negligence on the existence of differences, and its ineffectiveness (p. 56). Sanasarian makes the nationalistic tendency of Pahlavis resembled the religious bigotry and calls it "nationalistic xenophobia." There is even an indication that the state ideology of nationalism could be considered worse than religious bigotry. "Here there were no alternative textual interpretations or religious men with spiritual insight to interfere and redirect the currents of prejudice" (p. 55). The mentioned standpoint has a different narration from the Pahlavis about the pre-Islamic Republic of Iran. It accepts providing "a security blanket for the non-Muslims" and criticizes "the sharp ideological shift to strict Persianization deprived them of their small gains" (p. 55). It focuses mostly on the sudden violent backward of the secularist approach of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah.

The Jews ... living under the perpetual threat of assault ... the Armenian schools lost their license to operate in 1938; this was bad enough, but even worse and more troublesome were a series of articles in the newspaper, *Ettela'at*, attacking Iran's Christians, referring to them as "dangerous criminals." ... religiously motivated attacks against non-Muslims were reported [following the abdication and the exile of Reza Shah.] (Sanasarian 2000, pp. 54, 55)

About the religious minorities, it seems that the Pahlavi monarchy had an ambivalent policy, as it is mentioned in section 3.2 within the assessment of the instrumentalist approach of the Pahlavis toward religion. In general, it seems that

⁹ A report from the American Embassy of Tehran to the Department of State

the political centralization, or centralized uniformity, protected the non-Muslims from the sporadic violence of clergies and religious zealots. Keddie also affirms the mentioned analysis pictured the situation of the Qajar era. Keddie indicates that the Shiite clerical power was one of the causes preventing the formation of the central political authority. "The lack of centralization Iran was also dependent on the increasing power and pretensions of the Shi'i ulama" (Keddie 1983, p. 582) However, according to Sanasarian, the discussed standpoint is pessimistic on the secular policy of Pahlavis and more importantly considers Pahlavi monarchs as dishonest "Muslim secularists." In other words, it seems that the religious minorities partly had also the feeling of being alienated and being neglected under the framework of Pahlavi nationalism as an "obscure identity envisioned through state ideology" (Sanasarian 2000, p. 55). On the Persianization, let us not forget that both Foroughi and Kasravi can be considered as advocates of the Persianization. Even Kasravi as an Azerbaijani, tells the story of the failure of teaching the Turkish language in the Azerbaijani schools and continues with the epic tone that "Azerbaijanis never left the Persian and all the governmental plans from Ottomans till now has a reverse result. They have remained the forefront of protectors of Persian. In fact, Azerbaijanis have always kept the Persian as their heritage through generations" (Kasravi 1946, p. 23). Foroughi is well-known for his adherence to the Persian language and to found the Persian Academy. The probable affection of Pahlavi nationalism and Pahlavi Persianization on the religious minorities and their perception of the then reforms are out of the current research. However, e.g., it can be an inquiry to assess the possible conflict between the religious reform of Kasravi and the harmful consequences of his purist linguistic movement and the dominance of Persian toward ethnoreligious communities. As Meir Litvak illuminates the official discourse of that era:

Nationalism emerged as the dominant ideology of the Pahlavi state, and its construction followed a broader pattern accompanying the change from empires to modern nation-states. The trans-ethnic, universal principles of imperial rule, such as a religious charisma of the ruling dynasty, gave way to the ideal of national self-rule, which aspired to systematically homogenize the populace. (Litvak 2017, p. 14)

Assessing the Pahlavi conservatism from the standpoint of the ethnic is even more controversial and more irrelevant. The current thesis does not deal with the issue of centralism in the contemporary history of Iran. However, it is evident that Reza Shah, Mohammad Reza Shah, Mohammad Ali Foroughi, and Ahmad Kasravi all were supporters of centralism, all were against separatist movements, and

all were pessimistic about federalism in Iran. For example, Foroughi had worries about the probable Kurdish uprising in Iran inspired by the similar discontents in the Kurdish part of Turkey. However, he emphasizes that territorial integrity can be kept only through negotiations with dissidents and only by giving a sense of happiness to the nation. That is why Foroughi (2011) refused the use of force to oppress ethnic minorities in such an incident (pp. 23–26, 146–150). Similarly, Ahmad Kasravi, as a nationalist-religious reformer, refused to acknowledge any separate national claim from a multitude of linguistic communities in Iran. Kasravi denounced the rebellious event in Azerbaijan because he believed that separatist movements endanger the survival of Iran (Abrahamian 1982). In this regard, Kasravi was also an advocator of national unification and national solidarity. As Abrahamian narrates, in an article in the daily *Ettela'at*, Kasravi argued that Turkish was just an artifact of Mongol and Tartar invaders. “If similar claims are to be advanced by other linguistic minorities—especially Armenians, Assyrians, Arabs, Gilanis and Mazandarani—nothing will be left of Iran” (p. 218). More importantly, Kasravi called Foroughi the “sinful evil man”, while accusing him of betrayal regarding his decision to release some of the tribal chiefs after the Anglo-Soviet invasion (Varedi 1992). However, as Varedi illustrates, Foroughi cannot be blamed for all that happened after 1941, includes the tribal uprisings and rebellions (p. 110). The invasion is resulted in an ungovernable situation due to the abduction of Reza Shah, devastated military power, and the preconditions in tribal areas. Nevertheless, the very utterance of Kasravi demonstrates that he, as a religious reformist, was more stubborn and impatient related to “national security” and “national authority” from the nationalistic viewpoint. On the contrary, Foroughi as a conservative political reformer was more liberal and more tolerant in dealing with the tribal discontents. Some scholars believe that the prevailing pattern in Iranian historiography remains insensitive of Iran’s regional history about the Azeri and other ethnoreligious minorities “because such sympathies remain inconsistent with the national discourse they consciously or unconsciously seek to promote” (Clawson and Rubin 2005, p. 61).

The defect of the Pahlavi conservatism was an outcome of mistrust, insecurity, hesitancy, and the lack of confidence which all, in their turn, were the inheritance of the Iranian despotism. As it is mentioned before, despotism is not a political construct from the above, and simultaneously its tie with the below could not justify continuing the despotic policy. Concerning the downfall of the system, there should be no blame of the head of the Regency Council to give up instead of negotiating with Khomeini in Paris when the Shah had imprisoned his longest-serving prime minister and many ministers on the eve of the turmoil.

Amir Abbas Hoveyda (1919–1979), the economist and politician served for thirteen years in the office and eventually became a victim of the system under the title of “fighting against the corruption.” The government decided to use Hoveyda as a scapegoat. He was forced to resign from his then position of Minister of Court. On 7 November 1978, Hoveyda was arrested together with other 60 former officials, including the former head of SAVAK General Nematollah Nasiri (1911–1979), six former cabinet ministers, and some business leaders. The arrest was issued “on various charges of corruption, mismanagement, and abuse of power” (Nikazmerad 1980, p. 338). The next scene is in accordance with the former one; the head of the Regency Council dominated by the charisma of Ayatollah Khomeini. He was silent, speechless, and anxious when one of Khomeini’s disciples read his statement in front of the camera (“Jalal al-din Tehrani va Šūrā-ye Saltanat: Ākharin Tir-e Shah Chegūneh beh Sang khord/ Jalal al-din Tehrani and the Regency Council: The last shot of the Shah did not hit the target” 2019).

The cause of constitutional monarchy was dealt a severe blow and the Khomeini camp further emboldened when, within a week after the Shah’s departure, the head of the Regency Council, the religious-minded veteran politician Sayyed Jalal al-din Tehrani, resigned his position. Having compromised with the Khomeinists, he announced that, in compliance with “public opinion” and Khomeini’s edict (fatwa), he now considered the council to be illegal. (Azimi 2008, p. 219)

Almost a month ago on 26 October, the government had released near 1500 prisoners includes many dissidents of the Shah. Lifting the censorship of the press on 13 October 1978 dedicated the publicity to Khomeini and his revolutionaries (Nikazmerad 1980). The converse perception of the situation persuaded the government that the public would be appeased by this self-destructive domestic policy, while it resulted in an increased revolutionary outrage. On the 6 November 1978, as Nikazmerad narrates, the television speech of the Shah admitted “mistakes” (p. 337) with his tired and hopeless face, drove the last nails into the Pahlavi monarchy’s coffin. Mishandling the deteriorating Iranian political climate in 1978–79 is not an exception in the history of monarchies. Seemingly, the advice that directed the Shah to make such an absurd and contradictory begging that “I acknowledged your revolution and I want to save the country” (Ostovany 2009), came out of the Queen’s office. Milani gives a narration which is approved by Amir Aslan Afshar Qasemlu (1913–), the former diplomat during Pahlavi time (manototv 2017).

The controversial speech was by all accounts prepared by two of the Queen’s closest advisors, Seyyed Hussein Nasr and Reza Qotbi. By then, the Shah’s speechwriter

of many years, Shojaedeen Shafa, had already left Iran, and contrary to rumor, had no role in preparing the speech. "Had I been in Iran," he said, "I would have never allowed his Majesty to make such an ill-advised speech." (Milani 2012, p. 294)

Ali Amini, the former prime minister, who criticized the lack of politicians, had an ambivalent opinion about the catastrophic speech. His hesitancy is a sign that Amini himself is partly subjected to his own criticism and cannot perceive the right decision at the right time. Briefly, Ali Amini (1981) denied that he was the writer of the text of His Majesty's speech, but he confirmed that he was one of those who encouraged the Shah to ask forgiveness in front of the public. Amini, then, accepted that such an official apology when the people are shouting their demand "Death to the Shah," can inflame the revolutionary rage against the system (p. 98). Moreover, the Shah told the nation through his guilty tone "I heard the voice of your revolution" while he addressed the revolutionaries as a small group of "ignorant people" just a few months earlier (Nikazmerad 1980, p. 329). Let us not forget that American documents articulate one year before the emergence of the Revolution, on 19 January 1977, that the Iranian public idea became pessimistic on the ability of the Pahlavi autocracy to survive from any probable crisis. "There is a widespread belief in Iran that the Shah's autocratic style cannot survive his death or abdication ... This pessimism reflects their judgment that pressure for political modernization can be expected to mount as the Shah prepares to relinquish power" (Byrne 2005, p. 49).

According to the memoirs of Ali Amini (1981), the exhausted king was even insensitive or unaware about his anti-constitutional decision to appoint a military government in the middle of martial law just a day before his regretting speech (p. 98). "Sharif-Emami and his civilian Cabinet resigned and were replaced by a military government headed by Gen. Gholam Reza Azhari, the armed forces Chief of Staff. Martial law and censorship of the press were imposed by the military government" (Nikazmerad 1980, p. 337). The advice of presenting His Majesty's weakness in front of millions reminds us of the cautionary rhetoric of Edmund Burke about the role of wrong consultants to King Louis XVI in the time of the French crisis in 1789–99. Such advisors worsen the "tyrannous distrust" by leading the king to take refuge in the atrophied shelter of delusive moral plausibilities.

Sovereigns will consider those, who advise them to place an unlimited confidence in their people, as subverters of their thrones; as traitors who aim at their destruction, by leading their easy good-nature, under specious pretences, to admit combinations of bold and faithless men into a participation of their power ... Remember that your

parliament of Paris told your king, that, in calling the states together, he had nothing to fear but the prodigal excess of their zeal in providing for the support of the throne. Such sanguine declarations tend to lull authority asleep; to encourage it rashly to engage in perilous adventures of untried policy; to neglect those provisions, preparations, and precautions, which distinguish benevolence from imbecility; and without which no man can answer for the salutary effect of any abstract plan of government or of freedom. (Burke 2003, p. 33)

The focus on the performance and policy of the Pahlavi conservatism does not mean to neglect the polemic of its legitimacy (Razi 1987). Similarly, the failure of Iranian constitutionalism and the lack of its prerequisite of applying in a developing land does not justify the negligence of Pahlavi conservatism on the vitality of the parliamentary government. It is also a possible attribution that the failure of Pahlavi conservatism in the area of legitimacy led to its failure in the area of performance and policy during the crisis. However, discussing the *Legitimitätsglaube* or the belief of the populace on Pahlavi legitimacy has a reasonable connection with its performance to express itself as a crumbling regime in 1978–79. Regardless of assessing the normative criterion of its legitimacy, the Pahlavi monarchy lost its legitimacy within a year from a descriptive perspective. In other words, whether the identification of the Pahlavi monarchy would meet the normative legitimacy, the decline of its bureaucratic rationality ended to consider it as an illegitimate body politic in the perception of the public.

Pahlavi conservatism is woven with its specific xenophobia, peculiarly anti-British sentiment, and British conspiracies due to fear of being betrayed by great powers. The Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi (n.d.) analyzed his father's autocracy after 1953 by referring to his changed feeling as a subjected monarch to traitorous deeds (p. 18). Princess Ashraf Pahlavi tells us that Reza Shah was quite sure about the treaty of those who surrounded him in the last months of his reign, without informing his father about earlier evidence of coming invasion in 1941. The Shah had the same feeling of being betrayed mainly by the United States in 1979 (Lancast 2010a). The feeling of being subjected to the betrayal of trust can occur in politics, but it is an inseparable part of the despotic culture. With a national consensus on certain values based on democratic foundations, the emotion of being betrayed cannot be the same as what endures through Iranian political history.

As an example of religiosity in the Pahlavi conservative discourse, it is necessary to take seriously those terminologies that were being used at that time. Ali Amini (1981) reminds us in his memoirs that many officials called the uprisings *fitnah*, i.e., political sedition. He reminded them that the Shah, himself, called the discontents a “revolution” just a few days ago on television and they should at

least respect the desired royal description of the crisis (p. 98). As the clarification of the point, there is no objection to using an Arabic word, but *fitnah* has a specific implication in the political history of Islam. It refers to the incitement of resistance in front of a Caliph or insurrection against religiously legitimate authority. Ayatollah Khomeini and the current supreme leader used the same term for all of the movements, uprisings, and demonstrations against the Islamic Republic of Iran. *Fitnah* became a linguistic gestalt to represent the despotic political culture of Iran during its centuries. About the power of the Pahlavi state, no one knows how the Ancien Régime sustainable. As late as October 1978, the fall of the Shah was even “hard to foresee” (Kurzman 2004).

As late as the summer of 1978, after many major demonstrations and riots, most Iranian intellectuals voiced the view that the movement was over, having achieved its goal of liberalization with the shah’s promises, especially of free elections, and many persons close to the Khomeini wing of the movement have insisted that he and his followers did not expect the shah to be ousted anytime soon. (Keddie 1983, p. 590)

Nevertheless, the supposedly existent constitutionalist voice of the “most Iranian intellectuals” vanished in the revolutionary commotion of the anti-Shah opposition. Eventually, the seemingly sustained autocracy since 1925 collapsed and the Pahlavi monarchy could not remain as the symbol of stability and continuity in its governance. Edmund Burke (2003) finds the roots of the Great Revolution of 1688 in the *original contract* between king and people (p. 24). It is unfair to claim that the Shah had *misconduct* related to the unwritten contract between him and Iranians, but he was being *misled*, and the Iranians followed him to be the same. In the end, the Shah asked people that “Let all of us just think about Iran!” and it was *misread*, due to the decades of *misunderstanding* between the king and the people. In this sense, the original contract lost its authenticity in the eyes of both; that is why the Shah left Iran, for he did not want to stay in a country without people. With the awareness to avoid romanticism which is far from the conservative understanding, it is worth using just an analogy summarizing the fate of the Pahlavi monarchy; the whole story of the forty years everlasting crisis since 1979 is that the king lost his people and the people lost their king.

Eventually, we can summarize the principles of conservatism in three concepts, as Quinton (1978) expresses. 1) Traditionalism: It is expressed in the conservative’s attachment to established customs and institutions. It is “a historically evolved social order incorporates the accumulated practical wisdom of the community” (p. 16). It is a collective product made by politically experienced individuals under a framework of mutual responsibility in the commonwealth. 2)

Organicism: It takes a society to be a “unitary, natural growth, an organized living whole, not a mechanical aggregate” (p. 16). It is a composition of social beings, not abstract individuals. All social beings are connected within a structure of inherited costumes. The specific social nature of tradition makes the institutions of society not external like “disposable devices,” but constitutive of the social identity. 3) Political skepticism: It emphasizes the necessity of political wisdom for the successful management of human affairs. This wisdom cannot be generated from theoretical speculations, but it is derived from the “historically accumulated social experience of the community as a whole” (p. 17). Political wisdom is an inheritance of “extensive practical experience of politics” through generations.

A society is something altogether too complex to lend itself to theoretical simplification. The knowledge that is required to maintain it successfully is at once dispersed among many men, often more or less inarticulate in its possessors and principally incarnated in objective and impersonal social forms. (Quinton 1978, pp. 15, 16)

With consideration of all of these three principles, it should be mention that the Pahlavi conservatism had none of them; it was an arbitrary traditionalism, a mechanical organicism and ideological political wisdom to promote apoliticism in the Iranian society reversely resulted in the extreme politicization against the monarchy. With all these considerations, the Pahlavi policy will all of its virtues and vices can be considered as a *bad conservatism* in comparison to the comprehensive concept of conservative politics in the philosophy of Edmund Burke.

4.2 Islamic Revolution as a Result of Antagonism Between Politics and Religion

4.2.1 The Inevitability of the Revolution 1979: Determinism or Voluntarism

The Iranian perception of the Revolution 1979 has become the endless polemic and the cureless wound. The public understanding of the downfall of the Shah is a collection of numerous contradictory analyses and antagonist sensations. It discussed in sections 2.2 and 3.2 that the Pahlavi monarchy is still suspicious of welcoming Shiite revivalism as its domestic policy to maintain a balance between communist intellectual discourse and the religious revivalist discourse which,

according to its own claim, was against both Eastern and Western bloc. At the same time, the official discourse of the government was Eastern nativism in front of Western laziness as Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi claimed and attributed it to the Western people, specifically British. “You know how to work. The question is that you do not work enough” (AP Archive 2015, 00:06:23–00:06:28). The monarchical discourse of Pahlavi was trying to use the Islamic-communist discourse of its opponents to justify its own undemocratic feature because Western democracy is built for lazy citizens. In connection to the lack of loyalty in Pahlavi body politic, it is worth mentioning that Ahmad Fardid presented some lectures in the National Iranian Radio and Television (NIRT)¹⁰ about the sanctity of monarchy and the sacred spiritual feature of the monarch in ancient Iranian history (Nafi 2016). Ironically, the same person presented in the Islamic Republic of Iranian Broadcasting (IRIB)¹¹ after 1979, while he was presenting quite the opposite lectures in favor of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Eastern spiritual roots of *wilāyat-i faqih* and the Westoxified West (*Gharb-e Gharbzadeh*) or the double Westoxication (mehrshargh 2016), which means that even the West, itself, is misguided by being westernized. After 1979, he claimed that the philosophical visions of Heidegger are in harmony with the principles of the Islamic Republic. “The totality of Western history is void. Humanity has to strive to elevate itself. Elevation has come to us under the leadership of Khomeini” (Rajaei 2007, p. 183). Fardid is important for his unequivocal role in spreading a kind of native anti-Modern ideology in monarchical and then in clerical form. During developing his “anti-Western Islam-oriented philosophy (*hekmāt-e onsi*),” he coined the word *Westoxification* as a devaluating way of explaining the pro-Western attitude of intellectualism in Iran (Mirsepassi 2017, p. 8). Allegedly, Jalal Al-e-Ahmad had learned the mentioned word from him and wrote an iconic anti-Western work, *Gharbzadegi*,¹² during Pahlavi which received recommendations from many anti-Shah writers like Reza Baraheni, as the first decisive explanation to differentiate the East from the colonialist West.

¹⁰ National Iranian Radio and Television (NIRT) was the first Iranian state broadcaster, which was established on June 19, 1971, to unite the country’s radio and television services. It operated up till the downfall of the Pahlavi monarchy.

¹¹ The Islamic Republic of Iranian Broadcasting (IRIB), formerly called National Iranian Radio and Television until the Iranian revolution of 1979 is the governmental media corporation that holds a monopoly of domestic radio and television services in Iran.

¹² As Rajaei illustrates, “The full text was finally published in September–October 1962, only to be banned immediately” (p. 103).

The essay ... suited for the anti-imperialist struggles of the time, yet now in terms of an ontological reconstruction and reversal of the East-West binary with Shi'i Islam as the force of revolutionary authenticity and social change, aiming to overcome the empty nihilism of encroaching Western modernity. (Mirsepassi 2011, p. 120)

Al-e Ahmad was among the anti-Pahlavi figures who coined the term of the committed (*mota'ahhed*) intellectual and by the intellectual commitment he meant that Iranian intellectuals were obliged to use their pen as a "political weapon" against the then government (Pistor-Hatam 2007, p. 568). Therefore, the first usage of *Westoxification* in the publications became Al-e Ahmad's reputation instead of Fardid, who was more an orator than a writer. Fardid was against all modern achievements due to his fundamental anti-modernist attitude. He opposed the Constitutional Revolution of 1905, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and democracy. Fardid considered humanism as the declaration of man as God, human rights as the actualization of *nafs-e ammāre* [concupiscence and sensuality], and democracy as taking refuge in Satan. "In no way could democracy converge with the Qur'an ... Democracy belongs to the Greek, and the Greek man is the embodiment of *taghut* [rebellion against God]" (Rajaei 2007, pp. 183, 184). Nevertheless, like any other ideology, the Iranian anti-Western nativism of Ahmad Fardid was contradictory, anachronous, arbitrary, selective, and manipulating.

He condemned the most respected and widely known figures of the Persian philosophical tradition – Al-Farabi (872–950), Avicenna (980–1037), and Molla Sadra (1571–1640) – because they were influenced by Greek philosophy ... within the imperial framework of the Caliphate, Greek-inspired philosophical reason obtained an amazing depth, variety, and momentum in shaping Islamic conceptual horizons. Fardid emphatically rejected all of this, thereby designating the vast majority of Islamic intellectual history tainted by Westoxification. In this, we see the roots of modern *takfirist* vein, or radicals who adhere to teachings that declare fellow Muslims to be infidels. (Mirsepassi 2017, p. 18)

1979 means that Iranians one more time chose that all the compartments of their public life included political, social, economic, and military sections become Islamized and subside by an anti-Western transnational ideology. The Iranian intellectual discourse in the 1960th and 1970th transformed from the concrete duality of constitutionalism vs. autocracy into the affected discussion from the cold war with many anti-realistic and abstract dualities like bourgeoisie vs. proletariat or anti-imperialism vs. comprador forces. All of the new Islamic image of Iranians as a nation who will soon lose their "authenticity" by modernization plan, or as Khomeini preferred "satanic" plan, of Pahlavi government, came

out of this historical period with the cooperation of many intellectuals, political activists, writers, philosophers and sociologists who all educated and graduated mostly from Western universities by the Pahlavi national scholarships. The study of this intellectual transformation is a narrow road with lots of misunderstanding, manipulated, and selective historical facts, ideological preferences, and ultimately, the lack of coherency and consistency in the delivered analyses. In section 3.2, the instrumentalist approach of Pahlavi toward religion is already discussed. The neglected part of the mentioned discussion is the role of the autocratic element in supporting the whole discourse of “returning to the lost authenticity” (regardless of those of its divisions belonged to left or Islamists). For, one part was also belonged to the justification of the autocratic monarchy and was trying to convince the people that obedience to the current secular-authoritative system is legitimate. However, it has nothing to do with the anti-Shah’s accusations of supporting superstitious Shia beliefs or paving the road of power for Khomeini and his radical apostles to seize the throne and changed it to the clerical pulpit. It could be said that the Shah and the whole Pahlavi autocracy was generally a part of the dictatorship, which the Islamic Republic is also a member of the club. However, the increased Mosque networks in his reign had only a traditional function before the turmoil in 1978, though the Pahlavi motivation to let the religious institutions became expanded was seemingly political to use Shiite clergies as a shield against the communist opposition.

It is still an open debate whether the Pahlavi monarchy with its more than a half-century reign had a chance and possibility to reform body politic based on making a democratic connection with the government and the people, especially the middle class. There is also a paradigm of historical analysis on pre-1979 Iran, which emphasizes the reversed result from the autocratic modernization. In a symbolized rhetoric, it can be said that at “gateways of the great civilization,” which the Shah had a constant interest to use for describing his modernization plan, was standing an Ayatollah and the Ayatollah changed Iran thoroughly.

This peculiar fusion of politicized Islam and Stalinist Marxism had a certain ‘fit’ with the general character of Pahlavi-era modernization. The product of an authoritarian modernist culture, the middle-class intelligentsia was largely unfamiliar with modern democratic politics and its critique of religion and clerical authority. (Matin-asgari 2004, p. 45)

However, it is also a notable question about the possibility of a constructive social movement based on the cultural conscience. It means that there was a doubt on the power of ideas to form our world since Karl Marx made his theory of change.

The complexity of actual interaction between social structure and ideological infrastructure put a theoretical doubt on any assertion about the decisive role of collective knowledge to form reality. It should be pointed out that it is almost impossible to form an egalitarian collective knowledge in the whole society in favor of conserving the body politic. Each social class has its different interests and its different self-consciousness. The revolution does not need the involvement of the majority, but there must be a national common sense about the necessity of change and the modalities of the new structure.

In the same manner, it is not fully convincing narration to bold the undemocratic element of the old regime as a cause of the unconscious middle class (as educated part of Iran municipals) which led, in its turn, to the decision of joining the anti-Shah coalition and choosing the side of Khomeini instead of supporting the governmental modernization. It sounds like an academic overemphasis to recognize the roots of “the social and psychological alienation of the Iranian people” merely on the governmental side (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 51). There is also another theoretical uncertainty on the finalization of social knowledge to stop a destructive change like the one in 1979. The skeptical point is that the Iranian intelligentsia had already been influenced by global anti-Americanism in the 1960 s and 1970 s. A considerable example is the radical anti-Shah student movement abroad. As Alvandi reminds us, the radicalization of the Iranian student movement did not belong to a specific Iranian context, but Iranian students were “becoming radicalized in a global context as part of a transnational movement” (Stanford Iranian Studies Program 2018). Therefore, the situation of the student movement in the 1960 s and 1970 s to be dominated by leftist radicalism had no necessary connection to the Pahlavi autocracy.

However, in the absence of other oppositional secular political institutions, or affiliations with outside political groups, the student movement remained an isolated political force with almost no relation to other segments of society. ... Expatriate Iranian political activists were effective in starting a campaign against the dictatorial politics of the Shah’s regime, and in exposing its repressive character to public opinion in Western Europe and the U.S. They were also successful in recruiting many young Iranians into the Confederation and into oppositional activities. Expatriate Iranian oppositional politics also suffered from the erosion of secular politics inside Iran. (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, pp. 56, 57)

What Ali Mirsepassi recognizes as “the erosion of secular politics” can be confused with the possibility of social pro-Western politics appearing on the horizon in Iran. The secular politics, which was present inside and outside of Iran, was inspired by the Western left. The main problem at that time was not the lack of a

secular attitude in the opposition, but the presence of a strong anti-Americanism in the form of a “secular” struggle against the imperial power and its allies. Presenting “secular” in the then atmosphere as a solution to the political deadlock after 1953 is somehow misleading. What Mirsepassi called the “Third Worldist ideology” does not seem to be mainly dependent on the Pahlavi autocracy and can hardly imagine would not come on the Iranian scene in the Cold War and flourishing the global left. When a “pro-Western” policy is being demonized in terms of Islamic or Marxist ideologies, opening the gate of politics will likely lead to the end of the pro-Western system instead of pursuing a reformative attitude by a given opposition. It does not intend to justify the Pahlavi autocracy, but it emphasizes the main challenge between the Shah and the opposition regarding the global anti-imperialist movement. Rethinking the position of the Shah, there is still an open debate on the historical possibility for him to be perceived as something other than a “puppet regime” (Ahmadzadeh 1970) or “America’s man” (Trenta 2013). The political crisis of 1953 was an iconic moment to coin the mentioned impression from the Pahlavi monarchy and both sides, Mossadeq and the Shah, were involved in bringing the crisis to a bitter end. Removing the Parliament not to be the regime’s rubber stamp anymore, could temporally cure the deformed image of the Shah after dismissing Mosaddeq, known as a “coup d’etat”, but e.g. bringing the real function to Majlis could not dissolve or absorb the anti-imperialist coalition into the system unless it thoroughly turned out the regional and international policy of Iran. In every circumstance and by any ruling, Pahlavi monarchy would face with irreconcilable and robust opposition. The anti-imperialist coalition would never collaborate with the system unless to get rid of it.

Moreover, the hypothesis that the given openness of the socio-political public in those decades had a definitive role in attracting the middle class to the discourse of Pahlavi’s modernization is still doubtful. Not every democratic domestic policy can be necessarily ended to the conservation of the system. Along with the complex relationship of economy and culture and “the contribution of radical culture to the formation of” social class consciousness (Abrahamian 1979a, p. 383), it seems that orienting the revolutionary path in a constructive and preserving one is not only in the hand of rulers or the then government.

There is always a place of possibility to assume that a so-called integral knowledge or real perception of the world leads to a radical change, destructive revolution, and devastating crisis. The theoretical tendency to conclude a desired positive change from a supposed actual understanding is in itself a result of negligence on a truth that the history and all incidents are relativistic existences. Few figures in each historical period can think out of the box and beyond

the accepted clichés. In the case of 1979, only figures like the Shah, Shapour Bakhtiar, Daryush Homayoun, Mahshid Amirshahi,¹³ and Mostafa Rahimi¹⁴ recognized the entity and consequences of the Islamic Revolution in an actual way. Most of the intellectuals, politicians, artists, and others were zealous to welcome the revolutionary era. It is not an excuse getting rid of the personal responsibility in the historical moment of 1979 and consequently justifying *the banality of evil* as Arendt (1964) coined it to point the phenomenon of diligence, “sheer thoughtlessness”, “remoteness from reality” and to explain the tendency of people to be neutral and beyond any responsibility when a political evil orders to violate the human dignity and rights (p. 134). Instead, it refers to conservative skepticism on the human nature and on the Socratic virtue ethics that knowing the truth leads human beings to do the right thing inherently or “all virtue is knowledge” and respectively the claim about the sufficiency of knowledge to bring happiness. For, “knowledge seems to provide men not only with good fortune but also with well-doing, in every case of possession or action” (Plato 1997, p. 718). From a conservative view, the Socratic intellectualism can be considered as the Socratic naiveness. The related dialogue in *Euthydemus* and the endeavor of Socrates to convince the young Clinias to make him believe about the equality of knowledge and happiness (*Euthyd.* 291b-281b-c) is philosophical negligence on the complexity of human nature and the boundaries of reason.

To not becloud the mentioned historical moment, it is needed to indicate that the comprehensive picture of 1979 definitely could not be comprehended as we now observe it. With regards to the *relative comprehensiveness* of its own time,

¹³ A few days before the breakdown of the Bakhtiar government and the end of the monarchy, Amirshahi (1979) criticized the intellectuals and politicians for turning their back to the last prime minister of Shah. She expressed publicly her opposition to the Shia clerical dominance in the revolutionary time.

¹⁴ Mostafa Rahimi (1926–2002), Iranian writer. Rahimi (1979) wrote an open letter to Khomeini, criticizing his idea of the Islamic Republic, and declared his official and public objection to the desired plan of the revolutionary leader in constituting a religious state. Rahimi is mentioned as the last name because of his political ambivalence to support the anti-Western ideology of Khomeini, expressing his sense of hatred to the “corrupted” Shah, “imperialist” world, and then emphasizing his enthusiastic emotion toward the revolutionary leader and simultaneously expecting that Shia clergies bring democracy to Iran by leaving the political scene after the victory of the revolution. The fear of objecting Khomeini publicly made Rahimi declare all those supporting phrases, along with his conviction that “I am, myself, a Shia Muslim and my ancestors were also the same.” Telling Khomeini that a theocracy in our time is incompatible with the new needs of people and acknowledging his legitimacy at the same time, is like trying to vaccinate the body along with letting the disease spreads in all organs. Putting simply, the approach of Rahimi to criticize Khomeini was paradoxical and, in turn, ineffective.

it could not necessarily lead the middle class to back the Pahlavi monarchy and seek the conservation of the system. As a general example, there is a reasonable doubt that any efforts of democratization could change the belief of Iranian intelligentsia that the Pahlavi government was a client state, comprador bourgeoisie, and had subordinated itself to the American interests. The anti-Pahlavi mentality which had formed in an anti-Western ideology was insensitive about its undesired facts, e.g., that Shah was an international independent actor relatively, and using “puppet regime” or “client state” could not represent his policy thoroughly. For example, it is being neglected that the Shah pursued détente with the Soviet Union along with his prudence to keep Iran with the West. The Shah took a lesson from two violated declarations of neutrality during two world wars, and he considered it as a fallacy for a strategically located country like Iran. Actually, the Shah had a comprehensive fear that neutrality would leave Iran defenseless. As Alvandi (2014) noted, that is why the Shah refused Mosaddeq’s neutralist foreign policy of *movazeneh-ye manfi* (negative equilibrium) and formally aligned Iran with the West in 1955 by joining the Baghdad Pact.¹⁵ The mentioned international policy to relax tensions with the USSR and to strengthen Iran and the very existence of monarchy by starting negotiations with Khrushchev was even unpredictable for the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party.

The shah succeeded in ending the hostile Soviet propaganda campaign against him, and he undercut and embarrassed the Tudeh Party by normalising relations with their Soviet patrons. ... The shah declared détente with the Soviet Union to be the cornerstone of his *siyasat-e mostaqell-e melli* (independent national policy), which he hoped would steal the thunder of his pro-Mosaddeq nationalist opponents, who had long been demanding a non-aligned foreign policy ... With bitter memories of the 1953 coup fresh in their minds, few of the shah’s critics recognised that his détente¹⁶ with the Soviets reflected his growing autonomy from the United States. In fact, rumours abounded in Tehran that the all-powerful British were behind the normalisation of Soviet–Iranian relations. (Alvandi 2014, pp. 442, 443)

Even if we accept that “all virtue is knowledge”, it does not mean that changing this knowledge was a possible plan in the Shah’s reign and the means to change

¹⁵ As Weigall (2002) explains, Baghdad Pact was a treaty that “originally signed by Turkey and Iraq in February 1955 aimed against Kurdish groups. In November it was joined by Britain, Iran, and Pakistan, becoming a Middle Eastern security organization to protect the region against Soviet pressure” (p. 21).

¹⁶ Détente is the normalization of strained relations and is similarly attributed to a policy pursuing to ease antagonism, tensions, and conflicts in a given political situation.

the then knowledge was being dependent only or mainly on the cultural progression, open debates, judicial justice, social equality, and other various elements of a given body politic. A small rebellious demonstration can end a government with mismanagement of the discontents, and an unrealistic assessment of the probability to be faced with strong social networks during the turmoil. The art of conservation in politics is a mixture of a vast spectrum, includes the wise security policy along with the controlled process of democratization when the issue comes into the case of the Pahlavi monarchy. Nevertheless, the Ancien Régime misunderstood the importance of political participation, and it emerged eventually as “a self-destructive form of anger” (Banning 2006, pp. 74, 75) or as an anti-Shah resentment.

The notion of participation itself stands in need of better articulation, in particular through the examination of the nature of community and of the relation of the individual to the common, and this must be done in such a way as to avoid the enticements of eulogies to community. What is it that brings people to see themselves as participating? What educational practice fosters, and what stifles, this? What virtues does it require? (Standish 2005, p. 372)

It does not mean that the avoidance from the 1979 incident was thoroughly in the hands of the Shah, but it expresses the failure of the system, at least, to justify its position as a reformable government. The problem is well articulated by Edmund Burke as he described politics as an experimental knowledge supported by the ancestral precedence to manage the balance between change and conservation. Although, there is no insist on staying in historical oblivion that Iranian ancestors cannot be an excellent example of what Burke advised to learn from. Put another way, the defeat of the Pahlavi monarchy was not an exception in Iranian history if it is not right to claim that it was in accord with the bitter precedence of ancestors. Though, Ahi believes that the last ten years of the Shah's reign was the most suitable historical period to establish and develop the democratic institutions and educate the Iranian society to direct itself by democratic characteristics (BBC Persian 2019a, 00:09:48–00:10:40). Ahi asserted that both the Pahlavi monarchy due to its prolonged autocracy and the anti-Shah opposition due to its anti-Western ideology are responsible for the downfall of the country in 1979. Ali Amini, the former prime minister of the Shah, utters a similar opinion that the half-century of ruling Pahlavi monarchy was enough time to build a democratic nation-state and. More importantly, Amini (1981) believed in a similar way that not only the Shah but all the ones who had a position in the government or the opposition were responsible for the bitter end of 1979 (pp. 101–127).

Related to Iranian history, the fear of self-expression is the only lasting phenomenon in Iranian life. On the other hand, the state was in a permanent fear from its inhabitants to become revolts. Mutual fear did not let that the liberalization of politics could be transformed into a stable democracy. The lack of an educated, civilized, and familiar process of constructive and lawful self-expression, which can start from individuals and extended into the whole societal existence, still forms the Iranian swinging between reform and revolution. Iranians could not draw a clear line between *legitimate obedience* and *despotic obedience* when it comes to the issue of political authority. The mentioned fear was the main reason in the ancient world to obey sacred beings or God. Religion is still a remarkable element to form the self-perception of people within a certain and acknowledged geopolitical border, i.e., a nation. Nowadays, the main debate is about national sentiments and their role to form a nation-state. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a combined product of nationalism and Shiism. Was it at the beginning of 1979 such a kind of mixture? There are two antagonist narrations about the mentioned time. On the one hand, many pieces of evidence proved the will of Khomeini and the whole spectrum of the left to abolish the belief in an Iranian identity, to purify the minds of people, and to destroy its ancient heritage like Persepolis as the symbol of tyranny. The transnational mentality had a united goal with two different tastes of wiping national element of Iranians in the name of “workers of the world” or the name of “Muslims of the world.” In another hand, there was some rhetorical emphasis in the utterances of Khomeini which aimed to form the Iranian identity only within the framework of its late Shiite derivation.

The tendency of being identified with both religious identity and national identity is historically considerable. In Iran, the mentioned tendency of consolidating Islamic heritage and Iranian self-impression is more problematic due to the early Islamic history and the Arab conquest of Iran which led to the fall of the Sasanian Empire, the start of Islamization of Iran by Muslim troops, and the end of the Zoroastrianism as the official religion with the majority of inhabitants. The very occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 is an example of the “wrong” recognition of the path to “continuity” and the fall of a people into a deformed sense of nationalism. It is a thoughtful wonder, how Iranians with the early bitter remembrance of “weakness” which led to the end of their assumed “power” by newly-risen Islam, welcomed another wave of Islamization and chose to be “weak” in order to resurrect their “authentic” power and identity at the end of the twenty-century. Iranian nationalism became vulnerable to use as an instrument by aggressive anti-liberal ideologies.

Self-consciousness is the other side of self-unawareness. The causes brought Iranians into an ideological Shiism as the solution for their historical “discontinuity,” rooted in the decades of failed constitutionalism in the political arena, although the Pahlavi era fulfilled the constitutionalist demands in social, economic, and judiciary spheres. The vital failure of Pahlavi was their inability to make a comprehensive and dynamic connection between their modernization and the social classes. The sense of being absent and isolated from the public political decisions led the people to seek the sources of discontents into some metaphysical roots of “authenticity” and the governmental desired narration of “identity politics” in that time helped this wrong seeking process because the domestic governmental propaganda was weak, ineffective and partly anti-Western in its competition with Western democracies (A. M. Ansari 2007).

In narrow cooperation between different metaphysics, the promoted sense of being alienated from official media fortified leftist and Islamist interpretations of the same notion. The anti-Shah discourse took advantage of the paved ground of “ancient authenticity” to promote their own story that the deep source of the alleged current loss of authenticity, came from the very alienation caused by Pahlavis. The historical and durable Iranian discontinuity and the interruption of socio-political experiences “accelerated” during Pahlavi (Ahmari 2018) concerning its lack of social class or its failure to recognize its social class and try to build a meaningful tie between its modernization and its supportive social class. The result, as Azimi (2008) expresses, was that the Pahlavi state “enjoyed virtual independence from domestic social forces and reliance on tax revenues, and was thereby able to pursue its development agenda, further subordinate the middle classes, and ignore or dismiss the political and civic aspirations and demands of the public” (p. 7).

The main issue of the thesis is a reflection on a theory about the past which never embodied in history and therefore, it is hypothetical and only based on historical facts with a certain perspective to recognize some lost possibilities before 1979, which could be actualized, developed and used to stop the total loss of all demands and achievements since the Constitutional Revolution. The desired findings of the possible reconciliation between bureaucratic reforms and religious reforms can be considered as the reestablishment of a cordial relation between political liberalization and religious transformation. Therefore, the entire theory of the dissertation can be perceived in a more specific scale of assessing the relation of politics with religion through the possibility of transition to democracy.

The crisis of legitimacy in the whole period of the Pahlavi monarchy could be healed and resolved through two simultaneous and correlated reform plans in the bureaucratic and cultural arena; that is to say the conciliation between

political conservatism and religious reformation. In some analyses, the tone of assessment sounds like the Pahlavi political system was omnipotent as if the system had unlimited power and a leading influence on the society to change it in the most secure, prosperous, and democratic way. Consequently, all of the harm to the country after 1979 becomes Shah's fault. The mentioned perspective is recognizable in media, conferences, articles, and books. Is it true? No one can deliver a concrete answer to a total claim. However, the credibility of any idea is questionable, when it goes back to history in order to find the only responsible and guilty actor who committed, even indirectly or unconsciously, the unwanted and uninvited revolution. On the other hand, when an analysis stresses the details and the complexity of historical facts to conclude that the system had not so many chances of preventing the revolution or when an analysis aims to put all the guilt on the opposition's side, the logic of analyzing and the inclusive or comprehensive picture of the contemporary history replaced with the purposes, affections, and ideology. The latter dilemma is still present in the Iranian debate about "who is responsible for 1979?"

Each different side of history gives a single and exclusive conscience about a ruler, a government, an opposition, or the impact of foreign forces. Trying to make a comprehensive analysis on the probable successful connection between politics and religion or rethinking the failure of bureaucratic reforms and their causes, leads us to be aware of at least two points; the *benevolent autocracy* must transform itself into a *benevolent democracy* in a deliberate process and, most importantly, at the right time. The Pahlavi monarchy in every interpretation is considered as such an autocracy. The alternative to a benevolent autocracy when it comes to the revolutionary way is nothing but corrupt and brutal totalitarianism, whether Islamic or communist. However, there is also a second point, and it is simple to understand and hard to acknowledge: There must be an acceptance of the mentioned political transformation from the oppositional side of every government. The theorist of the anti-Shah Iranian Guerrillas, Ahmadzadeh (1970), was clear that the ultimate purpose of the armed struggle is not to transform *Shah's dictatorship* into the *Shah's democracy*, which he observed as "purported changes" of a "puppet regime." Ironically, he accused the Tudeh party of being deviated from the *revolutionary authenticity* due to Tudeh's "opportunism, revisionism and its connectionist line" (p. 6). Accordingly, Ahmadzadeh attributes cowardliness to Parviz Nikkhah (1939–1979) due to his renouncement of "previous opposition to the regime" (p. 43). Nikkhah is the most explanatory example of the stubbornness of the anti-Shah opposition. Their reaction to the revisionist decision of Nikkhah to support the Pahlavi modernization demonstrates their

ideological tendency to impose hatred into politics and to personalize the political resentment into the character of the Shah. Interestingly, Nikkhah was the “intellectual star of the Confederation of Iranian Students’ second congress in London in January 1961” In his imprisonment, he became an idol for the student movement (Afkhani 2009, p. 389). However, Nikkhah became a traitor when he revised his political thought. “He submitted a project for reorganizing the three revolution corps (education, health, development) into a system designed to achieve the moral purpose of the shah’s White Revolution” (p. 391). After the downfall of the Pahlavi monarchy, Nikkhah was among the first group of those who were subjected to the revolutionary rage. He was executed on 13 March 1979.

To mention the problematic situation, there is no escape from this debate by giving only descriptive narrations and ultimately put a simple and neutral conclusion about the guilt and responsibility of all sides, includes Shah, his opposition, foreign forces, and the people. This kind of impartiality about history can only prove the impossible work of seeing the history from a non-perspective standpoint, which is in itself a kind of perspective that fades many parts of the past and delivers a useless narration under the name of morality and nonpartisanship. With all these considerations, the chosen perspective of the current inquiry is to defend the right liberal orientation in Iranian political history, which lost the battle in 1979. However, the supposed right-liberal politics faced defeat partly due to its previous failure constituting a dynamic relation with the middle class. Ultimately, “the torrent of the middle class and working-class protests had come together to burst asunder the Pahlavi dam, tearing apart its pillars, and washing away most of its foundations” (Abrahamian 1982, p. 526).

4.2.2 Revolutionary Machiavellism of the anti-Shah Opposition: The Sacred Instrumentalism

The very occurrence of the Islamic Revolution is the epiphany of a chaotic political culture of Iran in 1960th and 1970th. What Giddens (1987) considered as “a signal of the crisis of modernity” in his analysis of modern state and bureaucratized political forms (pp. 48–50), can be applied in 1979 as a result of failure to build an Iranian nation-state since 1905. As Homayoun (2009b) reminds us, the pretexts and causes of the Revolution of 1979 are one of the most complicated historical events, and despite producing rich academic literature, it is still partly incomprehensible. The American report on 19 January 1977 illustrated that the Shah is a ruler free from “serious domestic threat” and predicted that “at age 57,

in fine health, and protected by an elaborate security apparatus, the Shah has an excellent chance to rule for ... more years, at which time he has indicated that the Crown Prince would assume the throne" (Byrne 2005, p. 45). On 17 January 1980 in an interview by David Frost, the Shah expressed his unrecoverable shock from all the rapid occurrence while spent the last days of his life in Panama.

I had many sleepless nights, just wondering 'what is happening?', cause I still do not understand what has happened. Questioning 'what is going on?' ... But it was not so much the question that I was thinking that 'It is time to go!' I was rather thinking that ... You know? Like an end to something ... of me, of an Iran, of something ... my country has fallen to pieces. (Lancast 2010a)

However, the essential point which remains as a persistent denial position of the anti-Shah forces is well-explained by Alvandi that *1979 was not a revolution of rights*. "Their struggle was not a struggle for constitutionalism in Iran or rights or anything like that. Rather, what they see themselves was as sort of Iranian front of a global anti-imperial struggle" (Stanford Iranian Studies Program 2018). That is why they *de facto* hired Amnesty International to serve their political hatred against the Shah embodied in extremely exaggerative, i.e., false, statistics on the violation of human rights under the Pahlavi monarchy. "Amnesty International plays a very important part in the mobilization of human rights as a weapon by the Iranian opposition against the Shah ... Amnesty International plays a role in essentially legitimizing the human rights claims of the Iranian opposition" (Stanford Iranian Studies Program 2018). As Alvandi notes, the role of Amnesty International in that crucial period thoroughly undermined Amnesty's claims to be politically independent. Moreover, Keddie put a light on the antagonist orientation of two revolutions in 1905 and 1979. Both revolutions formed their ideology by the recognition of their enemy. As Keddie (1983) illustrates, the perceived enemy of the Constitutional Revolution was a traditionalist failed Qajar, and the consensus was to accept the Western manner in order to pass the weakness of Iran. On the contrary, the Islamic Revolution had personalized its enemy in the character of the Shah as a symbol of a half-century Westernization which made Iran subjected to imperialist powers. However, Keddie's conclusion that both revolutions can be defined as "fighting against autocracy, for greater democracy, and for constitutionalism" is disputable. In other words, the "much ideological continuity" between 1905 and 1979 is not quite recognizable (p. 593).

It is mentioned before in chapter 3 about the paradoxical characteristics of the Shah's "secular" opposition; a mixed form of religiosity, opportunism, anti-imperialism, and chanting for freedom with a tendency to build an anti-Western

totalitarian system. By backing Ayatollah Khomeini, “democratic” demands found their real content in the character of a leader who had all they sought; religious charisma, resentment against the Shah, and also harsh rhetoric against the liberal world order. The opposition was “constantly reminded of Khomeini’s religious decree” and his high clerical position (Eisenstadt 2011, p. 6). Accordingly, the “laic” opposition provided a “religious sanction” for itself by supporting a radical religious leader (p. 6). They mixed Marx’s motto that “religion is the opium of the people” to their solidarity and unity with Khomeini as a fanatic Shiite Mullah.

The intellectual ‘paradigm shift’ towards a largely negative depiction of an entity called ‘the West’ occurred with the intervention of the Tudeh’s Marxist–Leninist discourse, especially in the post-1953 period when the Pahlavi monarchy was increasingly and openly aligned with ‘the West’ ... Earlier in the century, the social democrats had called for the separation of religion and state. But the Tudeh Party set a new precedent for Marxists by refusing critical engagement with religion or clerical power. In fact the Tudeh had initially gone as far as insisting on the party’s adherence to Shi’i Islam. (Matin-asgari 2004, pp. 44, 45)

In this regard, as Matin-asgari (2004) narrates, the Tudeh Party announced in its official magazine *Mardom* (The People) on 4 December 1945 that “the Tudeh Party of Iran will be a serious defender of Islam’s holy teachings’ and would respect Islam and the ‘intellectual and sagacious clerics’” (p. 60). Moreover, Tudeh represented the Shah as a serious danger to the world and as a puppet of the American imperialism who wants to help capitalism in its critical time (“Siyāsāt-eh Neẓāmigari va Tajāvoz-e Regim-e Iran/ The Militarized Politics and the Expansionism of Iran” 1974; “Tahlily az Vaz’e Konūni-e Jahān/ An Analysis of the Current Global Affairs” 1974). No need to say that the Tudeh Party was the oldest left political one in Iran which was part of the Islamic Revolution and then part of the Islamic Republic till their turn to be removed from the scene arrived, and Islamic trials set up for them by “The Unknown Soldiers of Imam Mahdī”¹⁷ in 1983. With all of these historical records of anti-Shah opposition, mocking the personal religious characteristics of the Shah and neglecting his secular policies is psychological shield of leftist and laic opposition to hide their historical wrong

¹⁷ “The Unknown Soldiers of Imam Mahdī” is a sacred title that Ayatollah Khomeini gave to the revolutionary security forces or the employees of The Ministry of Intelligence of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It means that he introduced all the interrogators and tortures as the soldiers of the last occulted Imam in Shia history. Similarly, Khomeini attributed “The Party of Allah” to the mobs and radical supporters of his ideology which is embodied in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Both titles show the Shiite ideology of the founder of the current regime and also they can be considered as main terms in his political theology.

choice and their deep religiosity. Their choice and characteristics put them in the category that the Shah articulated in some interviews as “Islamist Communists” in 1970th or the “red and black regressive forces” which the Shah attributed in 1960th to opponents of his White Revolution includes Islamists and communists (thekinolibrary 2017a, 00:05:24–00:05:41; Keddie and Richard 2006, p. 225). From the perspective of an ideal democracy, it is undeniable that the autocratic modernization of Pahlavi neglected the “liberal constitution” of the revolution of 1905–1909 against Qajar despotism (Abrahamian 1982), but the negative side of Pahlavi cannot be distorted to represent a positive picture of its opposition and despotic political culture among them. In comparison and concerning the human rights criteria, the Shah was a benevolent dictator in front of his opposition, who created a totalitarian theocracy lately.

The deeds of so-called liberal religious groups were not better than laic left-ists and the Marxist-Leninist side. Mehdi Bazargan (1907–1995) was Iran’s first Prime Minister after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the leader of The Freedom Movement of Iran (FMI) or Liberation Movement of Iran. A few months before his resignation, Bazargan did an essential interview with Oriana Fallaci. In the interview, Bazargan (1979) tried to prove his adherence to liberal values in his personal life by saying that he did not force his daughter on her marriage decision. Nevertheless, many of his utterances are clear evidence to show his patriarchal personality, his anti-Semitism, his Islamic tendencies, his thorough ignorance of the Islamic fundamentality of the revolution of 1979, and finally his personal problems with Shapour Bakhtiar, i.e., the last prime minister of the Shah. The first Western-fashioned prime minister of a newly established theocracy in Iran praised himself for following the path of some “intellectual” clergies in the history of Iran like Mahmoud Taleghani (1911–1979)¹⁸ and Mirza Na’ini¹⁹ who were against “imposed religion” and “religious despotism”, he simultaneously praised Khomeini as “a kind of father, a paterfamilias.”

The character of very Mahmoud Taleghani (1911–1979) seems to be worth discussing along with Bazargan. Taleghani is considered among the first moderate Mullahs who collaborated to build an extreme Islamist power in Iran. He was an Iranian theologian, Qur’an Commentator, and senior Shia cleric of Iran. By

¹⁸ Mahmoud Taleghani was an Iranian theologian, Muslim reformer, and senior Shiite clergy. Taleghani was among influential revolutionary leaders in 1979 and a founding member of the Freedom Movement of Iran. He was notably Tehran’s first Friday Prayer Imam after the downfall of the monarchy.

¹⁹ Mirza Mohammad Hussein Naini Gharavi (1860–1936) was Iranian Twelver Shia Marja. Ayatollah Naini is well-known to support Iran’s Constitutional Revolution of 1905 by formulating a kind of religious argument in favor of constitutionalism.

order of Ayatollah Khomeini, he was the first Imam for Friday Prayer in Tehran after the fall of Iran's interim government, in late July 1979. During the intense time of settling the Islamic Republic, Taleghani painted the Islamist demands of Ayatollah Khomeini for media and the public with liberal colors. For example, Khomeini started his plan to make the Islamic veil mandatory in Iran, and he faced the great women demonstration on 8 March 1979 in Tehran against his order not let any woman in official institutions without headscarf or "proper Islamic clothes." On this occasion, Taleghani played a role to deny Khomeini's clear motivation and refer people to the liberal spirit of Islam. Despite some conflictions between him and Khomeini related to the political sympathy of his son to MEK (The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran), he usually was busy to support or justify Khomeini's decisions and every leader's step to Islamize the whole country. He was also one of the founders of the Freedom Movement of Iran along with Mehdi Bazargan and others.

It does not have a lot surprise when the first "liberal" prime minister of Khomeini tried to justify his clear tendency of being a sacred dictator by making a non-sense excuse that Khomeini is unconscious in his dictatorial behavior and claiming that he just wants the good of his people, or when Bazargan himself unconsciously convicted the dictatorial behavior of the Iranian "democratic" myth (Divsalar 2019) i.e. Mohammad Mosaddeq and makes Khomeini's character resemble to the one of his fugleman in politics, or when he appeals to cultural relativism in order to justify the political religious absolutism of Khomeini by saying that revolutionaries believe in democracy and freedom but not in accordance with Western concepts, or when he convicts that the only chance of victory of the whole opposition was to follow Khomeini and praises him to destroy the 2500 years of monarchic Iranian tradition, or when he claimed about his "step-by-step method" to make a peaceful transition and denied the true reaction of Fallaci that the claimed method was exactly what Shapour Bakhtiar wanted to apply in the Post-Shah situation of Iran and with the supposedly success of the last prime minister of Shah, there would be no need to him as the first prime minister of a Mullah, or when he did not aware of his paradoxical approach to disvalue and criticize the criminal deeds of the revolutionary tribunals and simultaneously praises the revolutionary position of it (lead by criminals and cold-hearted clergies), or when he makes a vague confrontation between his self-praised suggestion to run "extraordinary tribunal" and he does not understand it changes nothing when he justifies the same criminal deeds of "revolutionary tribunals" by constant referring to its representative from "the will of the masses" and the necessity to respect the revolutionary will and to accept the inevitability of bloodshed in every revolution, or when he accuses protesting women against

Islamization of being “SAVAK women or ladies of the imperial entourage who never wear the chador”, or when he defends the censorship of Khomeini against freedom of the press by saying that we are in “the particular historical moment” and Khomeini had “good reasons for silencing those newspapers”, or when he supported the lawless confiscation of even the printing shops of those newspapers by claiming that “They no longer belong to rich people who have fled abroad after collaborating with the Shah” and that they now belong to the Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled²⁰, or when he justifies the bloodshed in Kurdistan and just like a cleric claims that the executed members of the Kurdish Democratic Party were “the enemies of Islam and Iran” and that “there was no choice” except killing them, or when he reduces the international anger about the mass executions and the reign of terror in Iran by using a Persian proverb in order to accuse the West of exaggerating the rate of domestic and revolutionary violence against many sort of different people from prostitutes and homosexuals to religious minorities and political opponents, or when he says that those executed people was criminals who belonged to the Shah or they were rapists, or when he shows his deep anti-Semite mentality by claiming that the Western press was friends of the Shah and it is “in the hands of the Zionists”²¹, or when he denied the unprecedented wave of immigration or escaping from Iran by saying that those Iranians who are fleeing the country includes mostly “collaborationists with the old regime who are afraid of being punished, wealthy bourgeois who do not like the social and economic change” (Bazargan 1979, para. 113). The opposition to the Shah was not liberal and secular, and they had no actual perception of the term “democracy.” The mentioned assessment is true about all ideologies within the anti-Shah coalition. After the victory of the revolution, they affirmed the violence against officers, ministers, and other officials of the Pahlavi monarchy and simultaneously expected to be treated oppositely. Edmund Burke explains that revolutionary rage finds no limitation and has no exception.

²⁰ As Amir Arjomand (2012) reminds us, the new Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled or “MFJ”, also known as the Foundation of the Disinherited (*bonyād-e mostaz'afin*), is one of the most corrupted ones in the hands of the supreme leader which is free from taxes and also from any parliamentary or judiciary supervision and involves in the terrorist plans of the Islamic Republic, money laundering and other illegal and criminal international activities.

²¹ There were some anti-Semite rumors against Mohammad Ali Foroughi, we can imagine a hypothetical position or a possible situation to ask the first prime minister of Khomeini about the probable Jewish background of the first prime minister of the Shah and then he, Mehdi Bazargan, shakes his head as a signal of regret and shame about the disgraced life of Foroughi who was among the most honorable political figures in Iranian history.

They would not bear to see the crimes of new democracy posted as in a ledger against the crimes of old despotism, and the book-keepers of politics finding democracy still in debt, but by no means unable or unwilling to pay the balance. In the theatre, the first intuitive glance, without any elaborate process of reasoning, will show, that this method of political computation would justify every extent of crime. (Burke 2003, p. 70)

Returning to the function of the provisional or transitional government of Bazargan which was a projection of his own political character, the most surprising fact about the resigned prime minister is his everlasting ignorance about the history of clerical establishment in Iran, the very character of Khomeini and most of all the Islamic element of the Ant-monarchic revolution of 1979. Keddie suggests that the closest political adjective to Khomeini is “populist” and it is not accurate to attribute a right-left scale to his character. Keddie described him as a fundamentalist who even not loyal to his own Shiite literalism and declined the principal Islamic scripture “when it does not suit him” (Keddie 1983, p. 590). The mentioned simplicity is based partly on the simple perception of Islam and specifically Shiism in Iran. Surprisingly, Mehdi Bazargan, himself, was skeptical and anxious about the return of Ayatollah Khomeini to Iran and simultaneously invited the legal and constitutional prime minister, Shapour Bakhtiar²², to leave the Umayyad army like Al-Hurr²³ and come back to the army of Husayn ibn Ali, i.e., the grandson of the prophet (Amuzegar 2019; “Enqelab-e 57, Qesmat-e

²² According to the memoirs of Shapour Bakhtiar (2006), the soon-to-be prime minister of Khomeini attributed a very insulting or negative expression to him. Bakhtiar indicates that Mehdi Bazargan in one of his private meetings with the author said: “What kind of an animal predator is this man, i.e. Khomeini!” Bakhtiar continues and invites his readers to think about the kind of political deed which most of the prominent figures decided to chase in that time: “How could you describe the revolutionary leader as such and then accept to serve him as a parallel and revolutionary prime minister along with the constitutional and legal one?” (p. 124).

²³ Al-Hurr ibn Yazid al Tamimi was the general of the Umayyad army dispatched from Kufa, Iraq to prevent the rebellious movement of the grandson of Muhammad the prophet, i.e. al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib. He was ordered along with his soldiers to stop al-Husayn and his followers and bring them to Kufa. Ironically, he died while fighting on behalf of al-Husayn against the Umayyad Caliphate. Afterward, what happened in Karbala became the most inspiring Shiite annual monument of “the massacre in the prophesied desert of Karbala” as the battle between the right and sacred (i.e. al-Husayn) and the wrong and vulgar. The Shia made a religious tragedy of the event and it was used by Khomeini and his followers to represent the political confrontation to the Shah as such a struggle in the early history of Islam. The very event has enough potential of being used as an element in every political theology under Shiism.

Panjom/ The Documentary of the Revolution 1979, part fifth” 2019, 01:23:00–01:24:01). Bazargan resembled the then actual situation of 1979 to the early history of Islam in the battle of Karbala (October 10, 680 AD). Let us not forget that Bazargan had a figure of a liberal politician at that time and he was in undeniable competition with Bakhtiar; an actual and lawful prime minister of the Shah and potential and lawless prime minister of Khomeini. The mentioned historical metaphor proves the hegemony of political Islam in the most “liberal” side of the anti-Shah opposition, when they referred the public to remember Husayn ibn Ali (625–10 October 680) by looking at Khomeini which painted the image of the Shah as Yazīd ibn Mu’āwiyah or Muawiyah I (602–26 April 680). According to this Islamic analogy, Shapour Bakhtiar was a soldier of evil forces, and it is the same as the rhetoric of Ayatollah Khomeini based on his political theology. In other words, the “liberal” prime minister cooperated with the politics of demonization of Ayatollah Khomeini as part of his political theology. In this regard, the “liberal” opposition to the Shah undoubtedly paved the path and removed the difficulties for Shiite Mullahs and their mobs, IRGC, to seize the full power. Concerning the main theme, the nine months of the provisional government which belonged to the “liberal” part of the anti-Shah opposition reversed the bureaucratic reforms in the light of bringing religious radicalism into the body politic. Mehdi Bazargan and his ministers took a substantial step to establish the anti-Western hierocracy. Furthermore, Bazargan, himself, wrote many works to approve the compatibility of Islam and Modernity even by extracting scientific rules or the so-called spiritual source of scientific knowledge from Islam and its sacred texts like the Quran and the *hadīth*. Although his whole ontology about religion and science was based on a simple, realistic view, it can be considered as one of the reform tendencies toward religion.

The most important feature of Bazargan’s thought is his utilization of empirical sciences, and particularly thermodynamics, which was his own specialism, in his approach to Islam ... Certain scientific points were thought to correspond with some Koranic verses or Imams’ remark ... His main intention was to prove that what he called the ‘thermodynamics of man’ corresponds with many religious beliefs, particularly the worship of God, or the infinite entity, as described by Islam. (Taghavi 2005, p. 82)

As a history lesson, Bazargan became one of the most regretful political figures about his participation in the Islamic Revolution and “shortly before his death in 1993 ... remarked that the greatest threat to Islam in Iran since the revolution has been the experience of living under the Islamic Republic” (Mahdavi 2004, para. 19). Although it was too late to change his mind as a person who claimed

both bureaucratic and religious reforms, his regret is one of the moments in Iranian history to hear that a former revolutionary convinced the bureaucratic and religious regression as just one of the consequences of the anti-Shah revolution in 1979. In this regard, Mehdi Bazargan is a paradoxical figure in the contemporary history of Iran. During his assistance to Khomeini, he always claimed constructive reform by a destructive revolution.

Ultimately, the so-called “liberal” cabinet of Mehdi Bazargan fixed all the hierarchical foundations of the Islamic Republic, like legalizing the guardianship of the jurist, *wilāyat-i faqih*, which is the core of the current Shiite hierarchy. His cabinet also founded the revolutionary guard as the Islamist militia to support the ideology of Ayatollah Khomeini. Moreover, “On October 24, 1979, the provisional government approved a new Islamic constitution, formalizing Ayatollah Khomeini’s role as commander-in-chief of the armed forces” (Eisenstadt 2011, p. 4). There could be nothing more to do in order to fix the foundations of the then newly-established clerical despotism in Iran. However, it is not all the facts about Bazargan and his cabinet. On 5 February 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini appointed him in the mentioned position, but with an official order full of dominant Islamic utterances. Khomeini directly indicates Bazargan and the nation with the Islamic argument that “since I have appointed him, he must be obeyed. The nation must obey him. This is not an ordinary government. It is a government based on the sharia [Islamic law]. Opposing this government means opposing the sharia of Islam” (Geist n.d., p. 20). Therefore, even the rise of Mehdi Bazargan’s provisional revolutionary government was the first step to use Sharia as a legitimizing tool in order to settle the new political structure on the firm ground woven with toxic materials of Islamic ideology and Islamic militia.

It is a myth and part of the IRI propaganda which is specifically being spread by so-called “reformists” in the Islamic Republic to emphasize the peaceful Islamic Revolution based on the peaceful leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. He continuously promoted his support of a non-violent approach to the demonstrators. However, the revolutionary Islamic and Marxist militia were ready to react in the case of a clash between the army and the protestors. “The Khomeini movement followed its usual practice of placing women, children, and young people at the head of the demonstration to intimidate the security forces and provide cover for their gunmen” (Cooper 2016, p. 379). The same ideological instrumentalism toward human beings had been pursued through generating a culture of martyrdom by Khomeini resulted in the recruitment of children in the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980 s (Zahed 2017, p. 58).

Moreover, the revolutionary sense of hatred targeted peculiarly the cultural elements of Pahlavi modernization; bars, discos, clubs, pubs, and even cinemas

and theater centers. As just one example, the revolutionaries burnt more than 400 hundred civilians in The Cinema Rex located in Abadan on 19 August 1978. The revolutionary ideology presented all the cultural progression under Pahlavi as “corrupt” and “decadent.” Accordingly, all the places in the cities, which were the symbol of cultural changes and Westernization during those decades became targets of revolutionaries to be destroyed. The government reacted to the criminal tragedy of Cinema Rex and pointed the revolutionaries as responsible force, but it was such a failed try due to the negative public opinion that was against the system and could not trust any official statement comes from the government.

In fact, the Shah’s own words, broadcast before the fire, were interpreted as his foreknowledge and complicity in the upcoming disaster. Apparently referring to the burning of cinemas, which had already taken place across the country, he had stated, “While we promise you the Great Civilization, others are promising you the Great Terror.” ... Khomeini, in exile ... was quick to refer in a message to that broadcast as proof of the government’s complicity in the terror, calling the event “One of the Shah’s masterpieces” of public deception, intended to make the world think that “the Justice seeking Iranian nation is not bound by any human and Islamic values.” Likewise, a prominent secular opposition politician, Karim Sanjabi, of the National Front, called it a “Reichstag fire,” designed to turn public sentiments against the anti-Shah forces. (Naficy 2012, p. 2)

According to American documents,²⁴ the split between religious leaders, i.e., Khomeini and Shari’atmadari, may have become public as a result of Abadan Theater disaster (Byrne 2005, p. 139). Meanwhile, another solidarity of the National Front with the radical Islamists appeared in this incident. “Dr. Sanjabi, a leader of the National Front ... held ‘agents of the regime’ responsible” (Nikazmerad 1980, p. 332). The message of Khomeini on the torching of Cinema Rex was part of his Machiavellian politics²⁵, and it is still the primary approach of his political inheritance as the Islamic Republic of Iran, to attribute its characteristics to opponents. Khomeini was a leader of lie and criminality, and he accused the Shah to be a liar and a criminal. The whole period of Khomeini’s leadership is full of moral and cultural decline, and he attributed the word “decadent” to the

²⁴ The report of John D. Stempel as “Acting Head of Political” to Ambassador on 22 August 1978.

²⁵ The terms “Machiavellian” or “Machiavellism” has a wide range of ethical and political connotations in Humanities and also in the everyday life political discussions. It found already its own coinage even if Machiavelli, himself, did not coin “Machiavellism” and many of what ascribed to him under the regular sense of “Machiavellian” are not applicable to him.

then government. Nevertheless, the successfully discredited monarchy with ineffective governmental propaganda to at least defend itself against the horrendous accusation of committing a crime against its civilians, led to the public acceptance of the revolutionary claims of Khomeini and the so-called “secular” opposition. Therefore, the Shah and its government being left in the crime scene as the only suspect. Immediately, all the funerals became a political gathering against Shah, and the tragic event of Cinema Rex boosted the economic discontents and the anti-Shah oppositional plan to use all means in order to put an end into his reign. Ironically, the Shia revolutionary clerics set up a special trial for the event after the victory of the revolution.²⁶ In the public sessions of the trial, the perpetrators convinced that revolutionaries ordered the criminal deed. The revolutionary court stopped the process and immediately sentenced all the suspects to death and then executed them.

Testimonies and documents compiled after the fall of the Shah also established a clear link between the arsonists and the anti-Shah clerical leaders ... An Islamist functionary, Hosain Boroujerdi, who had been intimately involved in various revolutionary acts of terrorism that had helped bring the Islamic Republic to power, made a more serious charge. Disillusioned with the revolutionary outcome, he later turned against the regime and in a massive book-length confession claimed that the cleric who presided as judge over the Rex Cinema criminal trial, Hojjatoleslam Musavi Tabrizi, was himself one of the architects of the Rex Cinema fire and had personally directed the arsonists. (Naficy 2012, pp. 2, 3)

Moreover, the fundamentalists during the revolutionary days of Iran even did not show any mercy to arts and national artistic treasures in the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. The revolutionaries ignorantly defaced and slashed her precious portrait painted by Andy Warhol. In the same way, “the greatest collection

²⁶ It is an unjustifiable historical analysis to mention the torching of Cinema Rex without any referring to the ideological motives of committers and with giving some indirect clue to readers about SAWAK and its security pressure on Arab demonstrators. As Safavi (2017) illustrates, the mentioned vague story of people who were burned to death is woven with a narration about the discontents between oil workers and the emergence of labor demonstrations in Abadan between 1979–1980 with emphasizing on political activities of an Arab separatist or autonomist party which consider the people in Khuzestan as a nation along with other “oppressed nationalities” and which “organized a mass rally in support of the families of victims of Cinema Rex, who had maintained a sit-in protest in the local government’s Revenue Office in Abadan between Spring 1979 and Summer 1980. These families were seeking justice and truth about the torching of Cinema Rex” (p. 231). The supposed readers are right to conclude that the intelligence service of the Pahlavi monarchy did the criminal deed or was the only suspect in the scene, which both are against the historical facts.

of foreign art outside of Europe” which the Empress gathered, is now in dangerous circumstances to become destroyed irreparably by being hidden in the basement of Tehran Museum without any caring and treatment peculiar to the priceless artworks (F. Pahlavi 2018). As an indication of the relation of politics with religion, a permanent question lays in all of the cultural activities of Her Imperial Majesty. Did the mentioned tireless projects to modernize the Iranian culture had an effect reducing the extreme religiosity of a part of the Iranian society or at least making the middle class acquainted with the necessity of freedom in arts? The answer is hard to be absolute or thoroughly determined. Their secular role in promoting modern art and spread it out of the closed circle of nobilities or even between the middle class led to popularizing dance in Iranian society.

The 1970's is a very important and significant decade for the development of the Iranian dance traditions. Dance as an art form became increasingly popular and practiced by aspirants among the ordinary people. The monopoly of this art form for the upper class was broken. Dance spread out into different social classes of the Iranian society. (Kiann 2014, para. 25)

Nowadays, it is almost impossible to imagine such a popular culture or form of life in the current Iranian society. However, its lost heritage gained a nostalgic existence or a memory that the post-revolutionary generations never lived it but always hear from parents, watch it in old videos, dream of it as a possible future, and think about it as an enlighten period replaced by the institutionalized bigotry. The long-term influence of the whole cultural policy of the Pahlavi monarchy is not deniable and cannot be considered insignificant. The point about the supposedly historical progression of human societies is that the decades of modernization can be ended with theocracy and then the whole period before it will be seen as a governmental plan with no result or with contra result in a “short-term.” Relativistic feature of history makes a certain short-time lasted more than a half-century.

However, the resistance of the Iranian society against the systematic Islamization after 1979 rooted mainly in the memory of the Pahlavi era, its “autocratic” modernization including the cultural endeavors of Empress Farah Pahlavi. A simple example is the inspiring memories of mothers and the family collection of pictures reminding the days of social liberty, the ballet dance class, and the unprecedented endeavor of Madame Yelena (Avedisian) are all still the great

legacy of a period in which women flourished in a traditional society by the support of a semi-liberal monarchy (*Madame Yelena's ballet class in Tehran: 1949* 2021).

After the beginning of the Pahlavi era (1925–1979), the government and educated elites increasingly ignored traditional dance and theater, turning instead to Western forms such as classical ballet, which represented the modernity they craved. The first teachers and choreographers of ballet performances based on Iranian themes or featuring performances in which Iranian traditional movements were mixed with elements of ballet, were Armenians who immigrated to Iran. Prominent among these were Madame Yelena, Madame Cornelli, and Sarkis Djanbazian, all of whom had been trained in Russian ballet before coming to Iran. ... From the beginning, the newly established Armenian teachers created a new hybrid choreographic form in which ballet was combined with traditional Iranian movements and other choreographic elements—a form that would later be referred to in Iran as ‘national dance.’ (Shay 2014, pp. 627, 628)

The very quoted phrase leaves a seemingly contradictory narration unanswered; if the Pahlavi era is acknowledgeable only by stamping it as a pro-Western cultural policy which, e.g., “ignored traditional dance”, then how this assessment is justifiable when the very birth of ballet dance in that time was combined with “Iranian traditional movements.” Although there are speculative aspects on the extension of prerevolutionary changes in the women’s lives under the Pahlavis, the whole picture is being criticized based on the rapid urbanization and educational development in the post-World War II era. Higgins (1985) expresses that the urban, well-educated, and professional Iranian woman was *not* the norm. Due to the considerable residency of more Iranian women in rural rather than urban, the lives of most women were “largely untouched by the legal changes of the Pahlavi era” (p. 484). As Higgins articulates, The Family Protection Law could not affect the traditional families and local customs as the continued source of the deed which affected the interpretation and implementation of legal reforms in favor of women. Keddie (1971) gives a similar account but with more emphasis on the enhancement of reforms under the Family Protection Law, which legalized women’s rights. According to Keddie, the partial emancipation made upper-class women “perhaps be the most attractive in the world, while their charm and intelligence, as well as their appearance, are wonderful assets to any cocktail party” (p. 19). Keddie reminds us that despite the new opportunities for education and productive employment, the lower-class women could not exercise their new legal rights without an organized attack on traditional customs.

However, it is undeniable that the women had fewer legalized obscurities and had not been subjected to Islamic criminal laws like stoning and whipping. Moreover, the suspension of the Family Protection Law, revised in 1975, followed to lower the legal minimum age at marriage for women to thirteen, granted divorce to men on demand and women “only under the narrow range of circumstances”, and eventually made polygyny legal without a first wife’s consent (Higgins 1985, p. 480). Let us not forget that the scientific assessment of the secular policy toward Iranian women during Pahlavis is different from the post-colonial analysis that considers it “as oppressive as the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)’s compulsory hijab.” In his matter, post-colonialism reinforced the constructed confrontation between the East and the West by reducing the dress code of 1936 to a politicized conception of gender “to promote the body as a site of ‘political performance’” under a hegemonic notion of statehood (K. C. Hashemi 2018, p. 2). The roots of the idea of Westoxification are recognizable in this analysis which wants to be anti-ideological and produces a different version of nativism in order to differentiate itself from “others”; a theoretical endeavor to criticize the dichotomization of East and West which produces another dichotomy between nativism and universalism. Therefore, pursuing “the blackmail of the Enlightenment” in Michel Foucault leads to contest the universalist claims of the Western humanism in the *Orientalism* of Edward Said (Haj 2009, p. 202). With all these considerations, the relative governmental protection of women’s rights in the Pahlavi era and the systematic violation against women’s liberty after 1979 make it unjustifiable to reduce the Pahlavi monarchy into a mere patriarchal monarchy.

Back to the Pahlavi reform in the Iranian women’s life, none of the kind of religious reformations in Iran could bring the emancipation of 1936 and the relatively legalization of women’s rights and liberties during Pahlavis. It does not degrade the importance of such a reformation in the religious discourse, and it does not neglect the social phenomenon of such reformations which cannot necessarily change the politics. However, it emphasizes the importance of a governmental plan to push the society forward, although the dilemma of a democratic society as the only natural guarantee to establish a democratic process of modernization stayed unanswered and ultimately ruined the modernist monarchy.

The lack of contemporary decisive experience of letting Sharia law dominate the whole nation in that time and the black image of the Shah as a monarch who rules in accord with the American orders all prove the defect in Pahlavi’s vision and the ineffective Pahlavi propaganda. The latter is used contrary to its usually negative connotation. The propaganda is biased collective information, but using it is sometimes inevitable, especially when intensely negative and systematic propaganda is already set up to invert the public idea about all the governmental

achievements. The indication of the defection of Pahlavi propaganda means that the monarchy should make itself able to observe the Iranian society in accordance with social variety and should be able to spread the right information about the development of Iran effectively in order to influence the feelings and mentality of the Iranians. However, all these expectations from a defective body politic sound like the wish to change the way of history or to replace another spirit of history instead of that one ended up in an insoluble and inextricable crisis. In Hegelian terms, the apprehensible process of Iranian history in the Pahlavi era with its specific condition could not bring any other result than the collapse of the whole system. Freedom and the state are always in an inseparable and dialectic connection, for the state is the only lawful, benevolent, and legitimate form of freedom. The ideal state is based on the security of property, self-interest and which emerges “from the theories of natural law” and ultimately which Hegel called civil society as “the external state, the state based on need, the state as the understanding envisages it (*Not- und Verstandesstaat*)” (Avineri 1972, pp. 11, 12). In this sense, Iran had never embodied as a civil society with the national consciousness of its right standing point in world history, and as a nation-state which is, in itself, an integrated political gestalt came out of the shared horizon of understanding between rulers and people. Civil society is always in its process, but without any product out of the long process, it is not an easy task to recognize it.

The realization of human freedom is dependent both on the state and on the people and the mutual understanding and the perception of the very “freedom.” The best historical knowledge of that time already took place with regard to its historical possibilities, although nowadays it could be considered as the worst historical knowledge. The rational bureaucratic state had no historical chance of being established in the Pahlavi era. It is not determinism but just mentioning any theoretical hypothesis in human history to amplify a certain perspective on the past. Returning to the meaning of Pahlavi propaganda, there is no possibility of triumph if all the media and newspapers aimed to focus on informing the people of their prosperity at that time. For, Iranians had not trusted the monarchy and they also had lost their confidence to be a nation, although they were a nation in a reality which failed to be rationalized and accompanied with reason. Therefore, the almost unreal abhorrence of Pahlavi’s authority, led to an injudicious outburst of anger when the people felt that the supposedly terrifying political power works no more. The very feeling of Iranians in that time also owed to the Shah’s decision of political opening, i.e., the liberalization of the political atmosphere, which boosted the domestic crisis, peculiarly when the country had faced with

the slowed rate of economic growth, mainly due to the inflation came out of the mismanagement of oil revenues, two years before 1979 (Byrne 2005, p. 50).

Whether the liberalization can be sustained and lead to a genuine democratization depends on the ability of civil society to wrest more concessions from the regime and sustain the momentum of the reform. (Chehabi 2013, p. 26)

Relating to the kind of tie between religion and politics in Iran, the lack of a self-experience and dynamic dealing with the actual problems ended with the fall of all bureaucratic reforms and the government control over the revolutionary part of the religion. Society needed to be aware of the consequence of its own religious bigotry and the devastating outcome of Marxist ideologies in anti-Shah opposition groups. The question of how it could be actualized led any theoretical assessment of the pre-1979 era to conclude that the lack of democratic foundation in Pahlavi blocked any national experience in a limited and controllable scope in the Iranian public life.

There is a famous quotation of *Reflections* which is acquirable in much conservative literature: "A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation" (Burke 2003, p. 19). It is precisely the description of the Pahlavi monarchy and the significant history of Iranian constitutionalism that ended in a thorough antagonist revolution of 1979. However, the rest of the mentioned quotation is usually neglected. Burke asserted the conservation and correction as two fundamental principles of the constitutional changes in 1688, which he summarized as "the Restoration and the Revolution" (p. 19). The question about contemporary Iranian history is still controversial about "the right time" to change part of the system or the way of ruling in order to prevent the dissolution of the whole constitution.

The missed point about that era to understand the anti-Shah oppositional role is that most of them had no comprehensive vision of the importance and long-term influence of bureaucratic reforms under the Pahlavi monarchy. They also had no actual impression of the domestic power of the Shah and his plan of development and the fragility of both, when the issue comes to the support within those social classes being capable of turning their back to the system and break it down, as they did. Specifically, the Iranian middle class remained in a long detachment from the government, which was the only representative of their way of life, though in an autocratic way.

The vast patronage system was now not a lucrative asset but a political liability. Moreover, the gigantic bureaucracy no longer functioned: the Resurgence party had faded

away; former ministers were either in exile or in prison, and current ministers, such as Bakhtiyyar, were physically immobilized; and the central as well as the provincial administration had been crippled by large-scale civil service strikes. In fact, by joining the general strikes, the civil servants placed institutional interests behind their class sentiments and proved that they viewed themselves not as clogs in the state machinery but as members of the discontented middle classes. (Abrahamian 1982, p. 526)

As an example of the unreal assessment of the opposition to the Shah, it is worth to mention the opinions of Hedayatollah Matindaftari (1933-)²⁷ and his defense about any military resistance against the Shah. Moreover, he justified the membership of some related figures, who believed and involved in military operations, in the National Front, i.e., a party with the claim of political activity just and only within the constitutional framework (Matindaftari 1984, pp. 13–15). The remained unanswered question is that how it is possible and consistent to claim the loyalty to the constitution and simultaneously to justify the mentioned contradictory-party cooperation with radical figures of the Organization of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas which believed in *Armed Struggle: Both a Strategy and a Tactic*.²⁸ The discussion is about those opponents of the Shah who clearly defended the use of weapons in their political struggle and who made terrorist attacks publicly and who only used the word of “enemy” in a horrific kind of political rhetoric²⁹ in order to mention the Shah and his dynasty. It means they even did not accept to acknowledge his existence as a ruler with at least some useful deeds for the country. Referring to Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi just and only as the “enemy” was part of the collaboration of all his opponents to

²⁷ Hedayatollah Matindaftari was the son of Senator Ahmad Matindaftari (1897–1971), known as *Mo'in al-Dowleh*, who served as the 24th prime minister of Iran (1939–1940) under the reign of Reza Shah. Moreover, Hedayatollah Matindaftari was the nephew of Mohammad Mosaddeq. He is a lawyer, a human rights activist, and the founder of The National Democratic Front as an official separation from the National Front during the revolution of 1979.

²⁸ It is a political treatise written by Masoud Ahmadzadeh Heravi (1945–1972) an Iranian radical anti-Shah theorist. Mostly, he is considered a revolutionary communist. His most famous work focused on the claim that defeat of capitalism and comprador capitalism is a possible goal that can seize the political arena by *Armed Struggle; both a Strategy and a Tactic*. He left Mashhad in 1964 and studied mathematics at the University of Tehran. He discussed many subjects like guerrilla warfare, agrarian reforms, monarchy as the enemy, and liberating the mass from being an instrument of American capitalism. Ahmadzadeh dealt with the supposed “nature” of comprador capitalism and all mentioned political concepts in his works, mainly from the Marxist-Leninist ideological perspective. He was executed in prison for his political activities.

²⁹ In one of the famous works of the opposition to the Shah, written by Ahmadzadeh (1970), the word “enemy” is used numerously to refer to him, his dynasty, and his government.

demonize him and his Royal family. Khomeini referred to him as “decadent” in the Islamic sense and Iranian People’s Fedai Guerrillas referred to him as “enemy” in the Marxist-Leninist sense.

Rousseau at the beginning of his “Civil Religion” as the essential chapter of his masterful and historical work *the Social Contract* indicates a point that has a contemporary clue to understanding the Iranian atmosphere which led to a religious revolution. “Originally men had no kings except their gods, and no government except theocracy” (Rousseau 1999, p. 153). It is similar to what Hobbes said on the difference between the state of nature and the state of civil (Hobbes 1996, p. 133). After many decades of the Constitutional Revolution, Iranians decided to come back to the natural status; from a secular and autocratic state³⁰ to the sectarian and totalitarian one. The point, which is clear to be recognized and always neglected for the sake of political correctness, is that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not civil sovereignty, but a sectarian partnership. For example, we can focus on the situation of Bahais in Iran during the Islamic Republic. They are constantly oppressed by being executed, kidnapped, murdered, restricted from official occupations and even personal business, and also banned from attending universities in Iran. The body politic after collapsing of the Pahlavi monarchy deconstructed by the clerics, while in the thorough period of Pahlavi the body politic was continuously threatened by the clerical claims and it mostly resisted against the political Shiism. What the revolutionaries replaced was not a body politic anymore, but only a systematic discriminating entity. Back to the Bahai case, it is necessary to indicate their situation as strong evidence against any theories that focus mainly on the mass presence in elections to conclude that there is a functional democratic element in the political system of Iran. When Hanegraaff emphasizes “the pursuit of knowledge” and identifies it as an opposed approach to “the pursuit of power,” he clarifies it as an intellectual effort to insist on demonstrable evidence, critical argumentation, and open debate without censorship. Hanegraaff insists that all these principles are not self-evidently given and become problematic from the perspective of power. He acknowledges that claims of knowledge are bound with claims of power. However, the fact that the separation between knowledge and politics is questionable does not justify reducing the first to the latter. Hanegraaff reminds us that an open society is founded

³⁰ There is a doubt to call the Pahlavi monarchy (de jure and in a strict meaning) civil sovereignty due to the autocratic character of the mentioned system. The last Iranian monarchy was mostly pursued national interests and its efforts and international policy were to achieve peace and stability in the region. However, all of these facts could not cover the autocratic element of the system.

upon the free pursuit of knowledge: "A society, in fact, in which the very distinction between orthodoxy and heresy has become meaningless" (Hanegraaff 2009, p. 8).

The result of the revolution in 1979 is that the clerics not only have power over the civil sovereignty but also they made their own clerical sovereignty instead of it. As Hobbes warned about it, when a political system called civil and peaceful followers of any religion as "heresy," then we are no longer have civil sovereignty. For, "heresy" or any other religious accusations is a matter only as a private opinion (Hobbes 1996, p. 387). The crucial enlightening fact is that heresy has nothing to do with the accusation of being a threat to the official religion³¹ or a danger to the state, as long as it is in acceptance with the social contract and defines itself within the private sphere. Dividing the religious beliefs to official and unofficial could pave the path for discriminating minorities. In Modern times, the body politic defines more by secular and democratic policies, not by religion or identity. In the Middle Ages, there were many European lands with some Christian kingdoms, and Hobbes at that period gave a strong argument to defend the rights of heretics. He asserts that heretics "are none but private men that stubbornly defend some doctrine, prohibited by their lawful sovereigns" (Hobbes 1996, p. 42). During human history, minorities were the most vulnerable part of society to be discriminated against easily. The Achilles heel of democracy is to keep its distance from populism, which is the absolute dominance of public opinion over any dissident views. Naturally, it is harder for minorities to adverse public opinion and not faced political oppression. It is the logic of power that individuals can be oppressed easier than a community and, in the same way, minority groups can be oppressed easier by the majority. Therefore, there should be a preventing mechanism to control the executive influence of public opinion in all social compartments. In this regard, Sanasarian describes the first decade of the Islamic Republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini as the "worst years for religious ... this intensification of state intrusion into their lives coincided with widespread cultural cleansing and the 'reign of terror and virtue'" (Sanasarian 2000, p. 18).

To clarify the point, it is necessary to indicate the descendant meaning of calling a belief "heresy" within sovereignty and its consequences. The first outcome is the division of the people into believers and non-believers by the rulers. Dividing citizens by ideological criteria leads undoubtedly to systematic discrimination. The sectarian division means that the people who live under the political system are no longer considered as "citizens" but only, and at the best adherent

³¹ Official religion means the one which represents the commonwealth.

to optimism³², helots which were considered in ancient Sparta as an intermediate member in societal status between slaves and citizens. Incontrovertibly, they are not citizens. The reason is that the sovereign breaks the social contract even by neglecting the rights of the specific part of the nation. When a group of people is ritually mistreated, humiliated, and even slaughtered by the government, there is no longer any social contract in the land. The vague status of people in these ideological systems makes them not free men and not slaves; there are always possibilities to improve their status by devoting themselves to the official ideology. Division and discrimination are the roots of the clash between social classes and lead to severe class conflict. When the social order is designed to oppress dignity and basic rights, then the overwhelming importance of self-interest will rule on the people's behaviors, and people do not pursue their happiness within a false, broken, inactive, and self-destructive political system. For, the body politic is unable to deal properly with normal and rational social relations to improve and develop the whole life of its inhabitants. The growing social crisis in Iran like severe parental or marital violence, unprotected and uncontrolled sexual experiences between teenagers, and also the signs of a kind of antisocial behavior in Iranian youths are the least warnings about what would be the expanding and intensified social tensions in the future.

Another point related to the Islamic segregation after 1979 is the propaganda of ideological absolutism to spread bigotry and aggressive religiosity in Iranian society. When a state calls a religious group "heresy" or puts them in a pseudo-political category as "traitor" and "spy," the first thing which is violated is the principle of relativism in the case of any religious claims. Hobbes made it clear that pointing a belief as "heresy" is a relativistic view depends on the belief of the accuser (Hobbes 1996, p. 69). When a man thinks to be capable of proving a private belief, he calls it opinion; but if a man does not like another belief, it will be only "heretic." Therefore, "heresy" is a relativistic term and belongs thoroughly to the private sphere. The main problem for theocratic regimes is that they combined all the religious terms with the political implications; being a heretic would be equal to being a traitor. The combination of religious divisions and political notions made people everything other than citizens. When a political theology starts to rule on land, then no one is considered as only "citizen." It will

³² Optimism here means trying to understand the complicated situation of people in totalitarian regimes by rational and logical perspective, despite the irrational and illogical entity of totalitarian political systems. It means we try to analyze the case in accord with reality as much as possible. Understanding the people suffer from totalitarianism in their everyday life, requires no deliberately incomplete and confusing narration, regardless of the fact that the very circumstance is truly confusable.

be the same whether individuals are on the regime's side and will be appreciated by many social advantages, or they are on the opposite side and will be threatened and terrified by many falsified accusations and abandoning from the least requirements of a normal life.

The systematic and permanent oppression of Bahais in Iran³³ is just one of the evidences to prove the totalitarian nature of the Islamic regime as a Shiite ideology in the form of apartheid against some targeted citizens as a part of the society. The history of oppression against Bahais before the Islamic Republic was some sporadic harassment and persecution, but after 1979, it became an official governmental plan with a various range of crimes. Before the Islamic Republic, the hostility against Bahais was latent and inactive, but after the collapse of the Pahlavi monarchy, it became a sharp and bloody plan to eliminate the Baha'i community (Momen 2005). As just one case of the alleged accusation against Bahais declaring publicly, Let us not forget that the then spokesman and later representative at the United Nations delivered the following explanation on 12 February 1992:

Dr. Mansour Farhang ... denied that the Iranian Bahá'í community was in any way being mistreated and went on to repeat the charge of the mullahs that Bahá'ís had been torturers for SAVAK, chosen because of their peculiar psychological suitability to the task. (Douglas 1984, p. 41)

The reality was opposite to mentioned excuses and accusations. There is no evidence to prove the connection between the Bahais community and the SAVAK before 1979. It is part of the official propaganda to justify its suppressive policy toward Iranian Bahais. Mansour Farhang in the same position stated in June 1980 that the Islamic Republic is not itself opposed to the Bahais and there is no organized movement against them and all the attacks are committed by fanatics whom the government is not "yet" able to control (Nash 1986, p. 252). The mentioned "yet" lasted forty years and many domestic and international terrors, attacks and murders came out of the political structure, and the official figures whether denied them or made excuses similar to what Mansour Farhang articulated.

As it is discussed in the introduction of the thesis, the Bahai religious pacifism or political quietism is the third major shift from the Babi militancy and then from the Azali activism. Concerning Bahai's standpoint toward politics, it

³³ Part of the collected information of many cases including victims of execution or planned murder and students banned to study in universities or normal people face with many governmental disturbances to run their own business can be found in the report of Bahai International Community (2016).

is essential to know that its quietism became an instrument of justification in the hands of Mullahs to suppress them appealing to their apolitical characteristic by interpreting it as the Bahais are against the sacred revolution of 1979. The previous Shiite suspicious against them combined with Bahai passiveness and provided a mixture of paradoxical rhetoric for revolutionaries. It was paradoxical because if the apolitical feature of Bahais was acknowledgeable for the Islamic Republic, then they should not be accused of cooperating with SAVAK. At that time, The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais in Iran tried to confront the excessive waves of accusations from being agents of SAVAK to being part of the Pahlavi political structure. However, all of those official letters to the revolutionary leaders, along with made representations to domestic and international institutions remained unsuccessful.

The anti-Shah ideology made no social and individual compartment to be in the safe zone or to stand in the middle of the political spectrum. Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters from secular intellectuals to his own religious mobs expected that every single Iranian makes clear of being with the Islamic Revolution or against it. In this Manichaeian worldview, the political quietism of Bahais had no chance of being interpreted positively. The fundamental clerics had already formed their political instrument to apply the Shiite bigotries in the newly-established "body politic," and the so-called moderate clerics supported them by their silence which is a well-known reaction in the Persian culture as a code of conduct to show being consent through an inactive and indifferent standpoint. Among those failed attempts to rescue Bahais in Iran, it should be mentioned that "Baha'i representatives met with high-ranking clergy in Shīrāz, Qum, and Mashhad in February 1979" (Nash 1986, p. 252).

In this manner, the Shiite totalitarianism in Iran has the absolute will on the life of civilians and simultaneously has the absolute freedom from any responsibilities. When politics becomes sectarianized, thereon the distinction between responsibility and irresponsibility will be disappeared. The provisional government of Mehdi Bazargan, just like its policy in other issues, remained inactive and functioned as a bureaucratic instrument in the hand of Shiite ideology (Nash 1986). The result of a significant endeavor of modernization in more than seventy years ended up with Islamizing the bureaucracy instead of civilizing Islam. In any sense, the emergence of the Islamic Republic as an anti-Western Shiite theocracy is the most ironic phase of contemporary Iranian political history.

In the case of Bahai cleansing policy from the public sphere of the Iranian society, it should be pointed out that neither "secular" parties nor "moderate" clerics moved or uttered against the excessive governmental violence which the Bahais community experienced in the first years after 1979. Moreover, there are

some records of anti-Bahai statements and actions from anti-Shah opposition after the victory of the Revolution (Nash 1986). On the clerical side, it is a lesson of understanding Shiism regardless of the ideology of Ayatollah Khomeini as the most assertive narration. The general Shiite benefits make a contingent unity and impassable coalition against *others* or things in order to defend the shared establishment and authority. The different interpretations of Islam and Shiite teachings have no role when the issue comes to any threat against common advantages. In this sense, there is no actual distinction between fundamental clergies and moderate ones.

The totalitarian regimes, like the one in Iran, tend to make any relative concepts an absolute one. They project all of their fanatic ideas to reality; they are actualizing the desired sectarian claims and make the people the servants to the official ideology. The ideological segregation and discrimination in a political system by claiming messianic purposes are the evident symptoms to prove of transcending a religion into a body politic, so we are facing the embodied political theology into a commonwealth. Understanding the phenomenon of the only theocratic regime in the whole world, i.e., the Islamic Republic of Iran is vital to confront the Shiite fundamentalism in the Middle East.

With all these considerations, there is still an unanswered question that the Iranian nation invariably asks itself: Why we are ended up here? It is obvious enough that under the Islamic Republic and after more than twenty years of claiming “reforms” within this theocracy, the only achievement is the grievous lesson that the Islamic Republic cannot be reformed based on its history, ideology, and the characteristics of its closed circle of governors. The failed Iranian efforts to make the revolutionary regime a normal state means that the people went in a wrong way in order to build a nation-state by taking periodical promises of the Islamic Republic seriously. However, all the socio-political evidences to prove the non-existent “social contract” between the current theocracy and Iranians, does not mean that there was such a “social contract” in the Pahlavi era with all of its democratic requirements. The subsequent question is about the possibility of constituting a “social contract” before 1979. Forming such a legitimate contract between people and government needs above all a democratic political culture that finds its own foundations on the basis of a related society, government, and opposition. Primarily, a powerful and self-conscious civil society is the main pre-requisite of building such a mutual contract, which consequently leads to make a nation-state. The failure of the Pahlavi monarchy to form a civil society that supports its modernization and its reforms became obvious enough by the revolution of 1979, but the failure is a collective defeat of the Iranian civil society, the anti-Shah opposition, and the Pahlavi monarchy. As Ali Amini (1981) reminds us, “Not only the Shah but all of us are responsible for the collapse of Iran in 1979” (p. 122).

4.3 The Islamic Republic and the New Formation of Political Conservatism

4.3.1 The Stubborn Shape of an Ostensibly Shapeless Regime

The Islamic Republic of Iran realized a new concept of political conservatism. It is Shiite clericalism with “democratic pretensions of the Iranian population” (Martínez 2014, p. 35). It consists of the paradoxical elements of bad sovereignty.³⁴ Mehrzad Boroujerdi accumulates some of the most recognizable paradoxes in the supposed body politic under the Islamic Republic, e.g., prevailing sacred law over democratic rights or proposing a religious democracy through pre-modern rhetoric and classic Islamic terms like consultation (*shura*), consensus (*ijma'*), and allegiance (*bay'at*) (Boroujerdi 2001, p. 15). In a plain clearance, there is no possibility for “a wholesome return to the past” (Afary 2009, p. 265), and every regressive movement has some modern elements at least toward technology. Without the modern gestalt of power, there is no chance for totalitarian tendencies to nullify the politics from its supposed democratic competitions and its public participation and subsequently to form the desired “regime of truth.” Accordingly, the Islamic Republic took the republican structure and Islamized under the Shiite ideological discourse of Khomeini. In this regard, it is the only “modern” bureaucratic form of hierocracy in Shiite history and in Iranian history. According to Said Amir Arjomand, even the desired principle of consultation (*shura*) in the Islamic Republic “is accepted but as a subsidiary to the principle of Imamate” and only during the drafting of the constitution it had committed some efforts to link *shura* to the principle of national sovereignty (Amir Arjomand 1988, p. 180). In that time, a religious charisma was woven with the public resentment; Khomeini wanted a divine state, and people wanted a divine Khomeini.

Rousseau once wrote that the voice of the people was the voice of God; seldom can that idea have been given more precise expression than by the crowds that welcomed Khomeini in February 1979 and later voted in a referendum overwhelmingly for an Islamic republic. (Axworthy 2013, p. 5)

³⁴ As Rajaei (2007) articulates, Ahmad Fardid considered the Islamic Republic as a desired “vertical democracy” which he acknowledges as the authentic authoritarian politics against Western democracy and its demonic tendency of self-expression.

It becomes a popular opinion since the beginning of orientalist researches of the 19th century that Shiism was an Iranian innovation within Islam. As it is discussed in section 2.2 on the historical pretexts of emerging political Shiism, it seems that the native “innovation” had a backlash in 1979 (Momen 1985). In his *Persian Letters*, Montesquieu mentions that “the Persians use the word law to designate religious rules” (Montesquieu 2008, p. 246). What Montesquieu distinguishes in Iranians can be completed by what Hegel explains about the foundation of the monarchy in the ancient time. “In Persia namely, the Theocratic power appears as a Monarchy. Now Monarchy is that kind of constitution which does indeed unite the members of the body politic in the head of the government” (Hegel 2001, pp. 130, 131). The origination of the Islamic Republic is the reverse of what Hegel describes and can be reformulated in this matter. “In 1979, the Monarchic power appeared as a Theocracy.” However, Montesquieu reminds us, in *the Spirit of Laws*, that calling clergies to support the monarchy will result in the increased clerical expectation to engage in the political power, as it happened in the time of Charles the Bald (823–877).³⁵ The engagement of the clerical establishment in politics harms the counterbalance of authority. The clergies receive political titles, and the politicians appear as clergies. The ecclesiastical appetite mixes itself with civil laws. Eventually, “it was impossible for the clergy to repair the mischief they had done; and a terrible misfortune ... proved the ruin of the monarchy” (Montesquieu 2009, p. 396).

There are numerous analyses on the structure of the Islamic Republic. Some scholars chose the pattern of neopatrimonial regimes to explain the fall of the Pahlavi monarchy. A neopatrimonial regime is based on personalized power, is fragile to be reformed, and is vulnerable to revolution, mainly due to its personalistic way of ruling (D. Zahedi 2001). The attribution to the sultanistic regimes is similar to neopatrimonialism. There is also a theory that the Islamic Republic is a kind of Islamic monarchy and has some essential features of neopatrimonial regimes. As Amir Arjomand (2012) explains, there are also analyses based on nepotism and the emergence of “the new politico-economic elite consisting of the families of the clerical upper stratum” and excessive partners of security forces and the revolutionary guard (IRGC) which has formed the IRI network of economic clientelism (pp. 61, 182). Amir Arjomand, in his assessment, uses the “conservatism” as an antagonist term in front of the “liberalization” to interpret the post-Khomeini power struggle. In this context, conservatism is the same as regressiveness. Both terms work to picture a confrontation between moderate

³⁵ Charles the Bald was the king of West Francia (843–877), king of Italy (875–877), and emperor of the Carolingian Empire (875–877).

clerics like Hashemi Rafsanjani and radical clerics like the supreme leader (p. 70). Unexpectedly, Amir Arjomand claims that the Islamic Republic, after the governmental resistance against the reformist president Khatami changed from the constitutional system to a neopatrimonial one. *The constitutional theocracy* “was thus imperceptibly turning into a system of neo-patrimonial personal rule by the Leader, with increasing politicization of the Judiciary and ad hoc infiltration of a variety of governmental organs” (p. 181). Was the Islamic Republic from 1979 till 1997 a constitutional theocracy? How is it possible to use constitutionalism for the reign of an absolutist *faqih* like Ruhollah Khomeini?

Regardless of all defects in the mentioned theoretical considerations, the issue becomes vital, in the conservative perspective, when it is connected to the realm of stability and sustainability of a given body politic. In this matter, the Islamic Republic seems to be more institutionalized than the Pahlavi monarchy. The Ancien Régime was being personified in the character of the Shah, while the current regime is a complex of various forces under the *wilāyat-i faqih*. There is also another usage as “new Sultanism” that has been applied mostly by dissidents of Ali Khamenei as a negative attribution to emphasize his personalistic ruling. As Amir Arjomand (2012) reminds us, the new derived term from *saltanat* (monarchy) is derogatory only within the ideological vocabulary of the Islamic Revolution (p. 188). From a conservative perspective, attributing “monarchical” to the Islamic Republic can be delusive and intensifies the negligence on the historical function of monarchy as the most remarkable antagonist of clericalism. Concerning contemporary Iranian history, the categorization of IRI under a specific kind of monarchy, as Islamic or clerical, undermines the secularity and benevolence of the Pahlavi monarchy. It is still an open and unbounded debate to distinguish the peculiarities of the Islamic Republic under a more appropriate explanatory model.

The Islamic Republic is the only theocracy in our contemporary era, which is acknowledged by the world as allegedly “nation-state.” Meir Litvak reminds us that the revolutionary regime is “a new type of religious nationalism emerged as the dominant discourse, in which Islam ... was regarded as a constitutive basis for Iranian national identity” (Litvak 2017, p. 18). Accordingly, the Islamic Republic defined a new form of body politic by founding the socio-political order on the arbitrary concept of a Shiite community as its principal value. It is arbitrary because of the dominance of an anti-Western ideology as the priority, which led the Islamic Republic to form a proxy with Sunni groups or with the Russian policies. In any case and despite the nationalistic gesture of rulers, there is no obligation to fulfill the “national interest” regardless of the ideological expediency. Cumulatively, the clerics made the whole socio-political structure out of its

stable and progressive shape which had before the 1979 revolution. As Edmund Burke enlightens the revolutionary phenomenon, “As you have changed all things, you have invented new principles of order” (Burke 2003, p. 176). Wolfe (2003) delineates that the abolishment of a monarchic authority means abolishing the principles that had sustained the monarchy, i.e., beliefs in hereditary rule and the sanctity of tradition.

With those beliefs gone, one of the first tasks facing the revolutionaries was finding new principles upon which a new system of government could be built. Those principles, as Burke analyzed the problem, embraced what he regarded as at once an extensive and naïve belief in the power of human reason. (Wolfe 2003, p. 272)

Regardless of the monarchic naivety that is discussed in section 4.1.3 concerning the Pahlavi conservatism, the Islamic alterations took place on the ruins of the constitution 1905 with some arbitrary adaptations from other foreign constitutions, all in order to institutionalize the Shiite doctrine of Khomeini within a bureaucratic structure.

Under Khomeini the Iranian religious and political landscapes were dramatically transformed, making Shia Islam an inseparable element of the country’s political structure. Khomeini ushered in a new form of government anchored by the concept of *velayat-e faqih*, or rule of the Islamic jurist. ... Constitutional changes following the revolution established a system of government based on three pillars of power—the executive, judicial, and legislative branches. But sitting atop the Islamic Republic’s power structure was Khomeini. ... The stated aim of the Iranian Revolution was to upend the reign of the shah and restore Islamic ideology to Iranian society. (Bruno 2008, paras. 3, 4)

Just a few years after the victory of the Revolution 1979, “Khomeini-type religious radicals were first in the ascendant” (Keddie 1983, p. 589). The situation is combined with the severe order of dominant Shiite ideology and the chaos in ruling the country. The history of the Islamic regime is woven with corruption, terror, mass execution, and unsteady international relationships. They have expanded the sectarian ideology and the sense of hatred to the Middle East by establishing regional militias and terrorist groups like Hezbollah, which intensifies sectarian conflict, and is at least a significant threat to the stability of the region (“Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community” 2021). If the primary basis of conservatism is deep political rationality, then there is no evidence of pursuing any conservative approach in the deeds of the Islamic regime. Returning to the early part of the thesis in chapter 1, “conservatism” in this inquiry means liberal conservatism, and different forms of dictatorship,

peculiarly totalitarian systems, are not laid under the mentioned and specified definition.³⁶

Despite democratic hopes concerning Arab Spring, “the crisis of Islamism, the tendency toward legalism and reformist politics, individualization of piety, and transnationalization” could not bring a mixture of democratic values and religious sentiments in the Middle East (A. Bayat 2013, p. 15). The most ironic approach of those who always seek the symptoms and evidence of Eastern despotism is to define the Shiite theocracy in Iran as an attempt to pave the road of democracy along with neglecting the authoritarian but constructive reform (Ahmari 2017b), as the Arab Spring from above, in Saudi Arabia (Cockburn 2017). The importance of the current Crown Prince Bin Salman in Saudi Arabia and the reason that he becomes the target of obsessive condemnation by both the Western left and Shiite theocracy in Iran³⁷ mainly lies in Bin Salman’s plan to confront the Shiite version of Islamism along with some major social and judicial reform in his own Sunni land. He also tries to invite Shiite clergies in Iraq to join his anti-Khomeini campaign, and it is essential to know that some of these Iraqi clergies were part of Iran’s allies in previous years. For example, “Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has hosted Moqtada al-Sadr, who previously was known as a Shi’ite ‘firebrand cleric’” (Valbjørn 2017, p. 57). The Western left prefers to picture him as a “hotheaded and inexperienced” and as a figure who “has fueled sectarianism and war across the Middle East” while undermining the main role of the Islamic Republic as the founder of mutated sectarianism in the region (Erdbrink 2017; Hubbard 2018). In this matter, Bengio and Litvak (2011) illustrate the double play of Shiism to preach about ecumenism and the necessity “to minimize the

³⁶ In this case, Islamic regimes, like the one in Iran, are similar to the traditional divinity regarding their political absolutism; people cannot truly understand God and it exists everywhere. You can state that God does not resemble other beings, but you cannot define it and draw its boundaries in a clear explanation. Similarly, the Islamic Republic of Iran has nothing to do with Western political systems. However, it is not easy to find a similar state around the world. In other words, the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only God-based state in the 21st century which is called theocracy, and the last similar state refers to the late 17th century. Furthermore, God is omnipotent and the divine sovereignty also wants to liken itself to the image of God. That’s why every religious-political system is inevitably totalitarian with the severe tendency to dominate all the compartment of people’s life and fill it up with their political theology.

³⁷ That is why the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic, Javad Zarif, reacted to the question about the systematic violation of human rights in Iran by referring the audience to the killing of Jamal Khashoggi irrelevantly in the Munich Security Conference. The reaction is as if human history must be divided by the Khashoggi affair. At the same time, aiding Bashar-al-Assad by Tehran to kill hundred thousand unarmed Syrian civilians is neglected (MSC: Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz 2019).

Sunni-Shi'i divide by focusing attention on perceived Western and Zionist threats to Islam as a whole" on one hand, and its concurrent plan to propagate anti-Wahhābism which makes it immune to expose anti-Sunni feelings indirectly, on the other hand (p. 247). Relevantly, Alaoui (2018) reminds us that the sectarian policy of the Islamic Republic is not a simple traditional conflict between Shiism and Sunnism, but it is a purposely politicized resentment to target Saudi Arabia. The Islamic Republic, as the embodiment of historical Shiite survival instinct, is aware of how to use its rhetoric of hatred.

Compared with its Arab government counterparts, Iran avoids using sectarian, or overtly pro-Shiite, messaging where possible. Since the revolution, the Islamic Republic has aimed to be seen as a leader of all Muslims and has positioned the United States, Israel, and imperialism as the true enemies of Islam. ... its messaging leaned more toward anti-Saudi, anti-Wahhabi tones rather than explicitly anti-Sunni ones. As part of this narrative, the Iranian government singles out Wahhabism as a key source of terror, in much the same way as Saudi Arabia points fingers at Iranian support for terrorism. (Alaoui 2018, para. 41)

The annual report of "Worldwide Threat Assessment" in the time of Obama Administration indicates in 2015 that "Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism worldwide remained undiminished through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF)" ("U.S.: Iran Is Leading State Sponsor of Terror" 2018, para. 21). Coherently, the function of lobbies of the Islamic Republic in the West and peculiarly the content of their published works are in connection to section 3.4, beautiful monarchy and sublime theocracy. Moreover, it is a part of the cooperative Western plan to appease the Shiite ideology with different domestic and international motivations like the general sympathy of Western left with the regime, the global competition between West Europe and the United States, and the positive approach of some American Democrats toward Iran in their struggle against the Trump administration.³⁸ In general, the keyword to justify the Islamic Republic by using relativistic view in the assessment of applying democratic values is the steady emphasis on the "complexity" of Middle Eastern politics. Therefore, a result comes out like "politics there isn't necessarily the monolithic sham" or "Iran's body politic is a lot more complicated" or focusing on electoral campaign and that parties under the Islamic Republic update their message which is "a sign of the institutionalization of political competition in

³⁸ As a considerable exception, let us not forget the joint read by two American assets, Dubowitz and Shapiro (2018), who are belonged to different political orientations and different administrations, concerning the support of the Iranian uprising in January 2018 against the Islamic Republic.

Iran” (Dubin 2017, paras. 10, 16, 20). However, the output of all these emphasized complexities is a product of a simplistic view to undermining the Shiite ideology, the policy of aggression, and the economic corruption in the Islamic Republic.³⁹ An ideology can update its self-expression through many “parties,” but it does not mean that the content of ideology is changed or its actual effect will be different from the past.

These analysts, usually define the previous Iranian regimes, i.e., the late Qajar dynasty and peculiarly the Pahlavi monarchy, as a mostly era of tyranny with some defeated democratic movements. The great negligence in this matter is to deny the apparent sectarian entity of the Islamic Republic and the semi-liberal entity of the whole previous era. There is a strong motivation in media policy and also in the academic atmosphere to support the general standing of the Islamic Republic in Iran, especially from a global and regional perspective. There was the same support in the time of turmoil in monarchic Iran from 1978 till the victory of the Islamic Revolution. The complex of different coalitions was and are acting in favor of the current *political order* or, as an accurate definition which is closer to the structure of the Islamic Republic, of the current *political disorder*. The mentioned coalition includes liberal lefts, anti-imperialists, and naturally, the global wave of Islamism. The body politic, ‘the state’ as we usually call it, is capable of being beneficial and just, but there is no escape from the widespread threats which weaken a well-ordered state and the ties of social connection between the nation and the sovereignty. In these recent years, some regime’s apologists claim that we enter a new kind of social contract between Iranians and the Islamic Republic. Its central element is “national security,” which is based on extensive and well-spread propaganda about fighting against ISIS in Syria. The term “national security” is a part of not only the conservative political thought but also any sovereignty that needs it to keep and continue its body politic. There is nothing wrong to use the term; the issue is about who uses it, by which administration and ideology, and with what kind of outcomes for its people, its region, and the world. After forty years from 1979, it almost becomes clear that “national security” is the keyword for the Islamic Republic to suppress

³⁹ In this regard, it’s worth mentioning that especially during the presidency of Hassan Rouhani, many alleged “scientific surveys” published with positive results about the public welfare, the considerable support of the Islamic Republic, and even IRGC by Iranians and similar “statistical findings.” However, as Schachtel (2017) explains, there is a probability of the role of the Islamic Republic’s propaganda and lobbies to influence some Western media, universities, and institutions in order to promote such surveys.

its own people and to expand the ideology of Ruhollah Khomeini in the whole Middle East.⁴⁰

It is one of the key facts to understand the Iranian nationalism that rose in a secular and pro-Western form between the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 and the early period of reign under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. The last two decades of the Shah faced vague public sensations which were swinging between anti-imperialistic transnationalism and anti-Pahlavi nationalism. In this sense, the Islamic Revolution was a combined phenomenon. Returning to the general Iranian nationalism, even the influence of Nazi propaganda during the Second World War was not a governmental plan and had its roots in the society and surprisingly in the public anger against Reza Shah. Modern Russian researchers like Salekh Aliev (1926–2006) tried to criticize the common narration from Soviet and English historians about the zealous pro-German sensations of Reza Shah and his government. The negligence is to forget the social roots of a supposed political policy, which are sometimes the stronger embodiment of politics and even has detached from it. In other words, *Aryanism* was the main dominant narration of the Iranian nationalist discourse at that time (Saleh and Worrall 2015).

Aliev agrees with the fact that, on the eve of the invasion, Nazi ideas were indeed very popular among certain segments of the political and intellectual elite of Iran. However, he explains this not by the influence of German propaganda but by the rise of genuine Iranian nationalism. Aliev also argues that the majority of supporters of Nazi ideology did not belong to the government. On the contrary, most of them associated themselves with the Iranian opposition, whose members were not satisfied with the insufficiently independent domestic and foreign policy of the shah. (Kozhanov 2012, p. 484)

During the 1940 s and early 1950 s, some notable figures with religious orientation aimed to form a discourse that contains both Shiism and modernity. Related to the history of Iranian socialism, Mohammad Nakhshab was the main leader of the Movement of God-Worshipping Socialists (*Nahzat Khoda Parastan-i Sosialist*) who inherited the political orientation of the National Front. The organization was known as the League of Patriotic Muslims. The main theoretical agenda of Nakhshab was to combine religious sentiments, nationalism, and

⁴⁰ Although, the Western assimilated journalism into the criterion of Shiite theocracy in Iran, broadcasts the desired propaganda in Tehran that Iranians “now believe they have something to be proud of, with Iranian-led militias playing a central role in defeating the Islamic State militant group in Syria and Iraq, increasing Iran’s regional influence in the process” (Erdbrink 2017, para. 9).

socialist thought⁴¹ under the *Nahzat* (Rahnema 1998, p. 25). He attempted to synthesize Shiism with European socialism (Abrahamian 1982). In 1949, Nakhshab founded the Party of the Iranian People (Lorentz 2010). It was the political wing of Nahzat with the same ideology to actualize an Islamic socialist nationalism in accord with the Iranian Shiism.

Unexpectedly, the desired nationalism of the Islamic Republic, which characterizes by anti-Americanism and xenophobia, is recognizable in some of the Pahlavi statesmen like Ardeshir Zahedi⁴², the former Iranian diplomat, ambassador to the United States, and the son-in-law of the Shah. Zahedi (2018) published a statement within a paid advertisement to assert paradoxically that “Iran is not Iraq” and simultaneously insisting on spreading Tehran’s propaganda that the American foreign policy is going to the phase of military attack and supposedly to make another Iraq by turning the situation of his homeland “into a mess” (Esfandiari 2018). It is probable that part of the Pahlavi elites expand the inherited anti-Western conspiracy theories of the Shah and feed it to the (re)construct Shiite nationalism in the Islamic Republic. As Matthew (2010) articulates, ideologies like Khomeinism used these conspiracist languages “to divert political opposition away from the state and towards external threats, or in an attempt to maintain state legitimacy in the face of current ideological transformations and growing political and economic challenges” (p. 14). Therefore, conspiracist rhetoric represents dominance and self-righteousness of the state. Explicitly, Zahedi supports the regional policy of the Islamic Republic and even tried to justify its military presence in Syria by discovering a new foundation for “legitimacy” and “sovereignty,” peculiarly when the “legitimate” ruler killed several hundred thousand of “his” people.

Iran is denounced for interfering in Syria. What is not mentioned is that Iran is in Syria by the invitation of Syria, the legitimate government of a sovereign nation. It is the presence in Syria of secret armies from the US and other Western countries that violates international law. (A. Zahedi 2018, para. 5)

Related to the controversial and vital concept of “sovereignty,” human history is ended with *sovereignty* because of the purpose to be a free citizen within a

⁴¹ Kazemian (2016) explains some of Nakhshab’s thoughts which demonstrates a kind of democratic sense in his critiques of socialism in the Soviet system.

⁴² Ardeshir Zahedi, (born 16 October 1928—) served as the foreign minister (1966–1971) and its ambassador to the United States and the United Kingdom during the 1960 s and 1970 s.

given civil society. As Breier (2005) explains “sovereignty” based on the political philosophy of Arendt, individuals in their solipsism are free because of being in a non-sovereign situation. The sovereignty has been founded on the given social contract, and the latter is a constitutional procedure to form and to keep the nation-state. However, when the state started to kill its nation in an industrial way, it has renounced its own sovereignty by itself. We must differentiate the power from the violence⁴³, while the power is an outcome of a common political purpose, which is a transcendence from the state of nature in the Hobbesian term. Appealing to “sovereignty” in order to justify abolishing the political freedom and the life of human beings is against the theoretical foundations of “sovereignty.” Put simply, the inevitability and vitality of “sovereignty” cannot lead us to justify totalitarianism and systematic genocide. For Arendt (1972), the “strange consensus” of those who equate the political power with violence, can only understandable in terms of legitimizing violence and defining “the state as an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class” (pp. 134, 135). Back to the Iranian context, As Keddie reminds us, the complexity of nationalism is riskier to be invested due to its stubbornness being distinguished from the Shiite sentiments.

The strength of Iranian revulsion to foreign influence also arose from the long-held belief that Western nonbelievers were out to undermine Iran and Islam, and Shi’i Islam’s encouragement of self-sacrifice to combat enemies has certainly added to resistance to foreigners based on exploitation and domination. For many, Shi’ism and nationalism were part of a single blend. (Keddie 1983, p. 585)

Therefore, nationalism does not necessarily lead to a democratic and liberal order; it is like a knife that has both sides, and it needs a political proficiency to use it in favor of a benevolent democracy. Regarding the relationship between religious nationalism, governmental propaganda, and a comprehensive image of the totality of Khomeinism, or the political legacy of Khomeini as a new form of conservatism, there is a narrow border between the clerical opposition to the Islamic Republic, mostly from traditional Shiite clergies, and the very governmental religious nationalism. The theme comes back to section 2.2.5 and rethinking the relationship between Khomeini and his clerical opponents. Peculiarly, about the

⁴³ However, Arendt does not intend to give any point to “the preachers of violence.” In this matter, she makes a difference between inevitable violence and the planned or predictable one. Her main concern in this phase is that condemning any violence can lead to the condemnation of any war or any revolution. Nevertheless, Arendt (1972) is clear that “human affairs” are able to proceed without “the practice of violence” (pp. 132, 133).

intervention of the Islamic Republic in the Syrian crisis, there is a meaningful passive reaction or indirect support from clerical opposition.

As a remarkable example, Ayatollah Sayyid Sadiq Hussaini Shirazi is an Iraqi-Persian *marja*. He belongs to the prominent Shirazi family, which is one of the significant clerical families within Shia Islam. He is a senior dissident cleric in the Qom Seminary in Iran.⁴⁴ He is considered as a clerical figure, supports the traditional interpretation of Shia, which is partly against the official narration of the Islamic Republic. In one of his sermons, Shirazi (2011) condemned the mass execution of the Shah's senior civilian officials after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. More importantly, He criticized the very idea of the religious revolution in the Islamic world as a political deception under the name of justice and religion. However, Ayatollah Shirazi (2015) is not a secular clergy, for he believes in the inseparable connection between religion and politics in an ideal way, which cannot be found in contemporary global politics. His opinion relatively belongs to the traditional Shiite conservatism, which postpones the religious interference in politics till the advent of the promised Mahdī, i.e., the messianic figure and the last Shia saint who will rule the world at the end of human history. Therefore, the classical Shiism suspends any religious, political attempt in the occultation.

Surprisingly, Ayatollah Shirazi does not deny the whole of Khomeini's idea of the guardianship of the Islamic jurist, i.e., *wilāyat-i faqih*. He believes that guardianship should be taken by a group of Islamic jurists or a clerical council, instead of a single one ("Ayatollah Shirazi Kist va Chera bā Jomhuri-e Islami Mokhalef Ast?/ Who is Ayatollah Shirazi and why he is against the Islamic Republic?" 2018). Therefore, he does not exactly belong to the traditional Shiite clerics, and his later belief contradicts the main idea of the suspension of political struggle in the occultation. The very idea of the collective governance of Islamic jurists is not an unprecedented one in the history of the Islamic Republic. In the early negotiations in the Assembly of Experts for Constitution during the last months of 1979, some Ayatollahs and senior clerics suggested the mentioned idea, and it was repeated in the second Assembly near the death of Khomeini which led to the leadership of Ali Khamenei (Amir Arjomand 2012). With all these considerations, when the dissident Ayatollah Shirazi faces the Syrian crisis, he becomes suddenly silent or indirect supporter of Iran's intervention by condemning the presence of American allies in the scene.⁴⁵ There are some reasons for the supposed unintentional supporting of regional policy of the Islamic

⁴⁴ The teachings and sermons of Ayatollahi Shirazi are broadcast in many languages on a variety of television channels and radio stations across the Muslim world.

⁴⁵ For example, there is an Islamic institution registered in Washington D.C named "Freemuslim Association Inc." which promotes itself as a "Non-violence Organization." The

Republic even by dissident and traditional Shia clergies. As Hashemi illustrates, it seems that the old conflict inherited to Shia from the early Islamic history which made the separation from the majority of Muslim society played a decisive role in the contemporary regional tensions in the Middle East.

While they may not comprise a large percentage of Iranian society, “hardline” Shias who oppose the Islamic Republic for not being “Shia enough” do exist. ... According to them, only after the reappearance of the last occulted Imam are Shias permitted to engage in politics (primarily to take practical action in the Imam’s aid). For this reason, the highly political form of Islam, championed by the Islamic Republic, is not their cup of tea. Yet, when it comes to Syria, the ultra-Shias’ strong anti-Sunni sentiments have generated an ambivalence toward the war and prevents them from being vocal against Iran’s interference in Syria. For these segments of Iranian society, the Syrian crisis is painted as a “holy war against the Wahhabis,” who are the nemeses of hardline Shias. (H. Hashemi 2018, paras. 26, 27)

The same story is applicable to the position of the prominent Ayatollah Ali Sistani (1930-) who is one of the most potent and influential Iranian Shia *marja* in Iraq and the head of many seminaries in Najaf. He has been silent about his real opinion on the *wilāyat-i faqih*, and simultaneously Sistani (2017) is an anti-Semite who wishes the return of Palestine to its “original” inhabitants through the Islamic Jihad. “Western media, in particular, emphasized the conception that he believes in secularism ... He certainly believes that the government and the laws should not oppose Islamic laws, which suggests that all secular laws have to be consistent with Islamic laws” (Khalaji 2006, pp. 4, 17). Sistani had twenty-four religious institutions, and almost half of them are located in the Islamic Republic of Iran. His prudence has nothing to do with being tolerant or dissident. Any negative utterances against the system can directly result in the abandonment of all his institutions in Iran, which affected his own influence and power. Nevertheless, it seems that Sistani has an opposite view of the Syrian war and does not agree to sanctify a war that is more political than religious (Al-Salhy 2013). However, there are no public declarations in this regard uttered from him or his office. Ayatollah Sistani tries to balance his relationship with the Iranian hierarchy. He wants an Islamic Iraq under the Sharia, and he promoted anti-American sensations

organization belongs to the Global Institution of Ayatollah Shirazi. It announced many political declarations against repression in Egypt, Yemen, and even Comoro Islands. Moreover, it demanded justice in Palestine and stability in Iraq but when the discussion comes into Syrian problem, the Association of the dissident Ayatollah condemned only the presence of the USA and Saudi Arabia in the conflict with no mention of the financial, diplomatic, and military support of Assad from the Islamic Republic (“Rising International Tension in Syria” 2018).

through his official declarations to intensify the Shiite nationalism in Iraq (Sistani 2003). Expectedly, Sistani is weak in front of the Shiite network of the Islamic Republic. That is why he turned away from his previous support of the Shiite Iraqi militant group The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF which is known in Arabic as *al-Hashd ash-Sha'abi*) due to the late dominance of IRGC on it. In other words, IRGC could successfully transform PMF as one of his arms in Iraq, which was not the primary will of Sistani, and he could not predict it (Kotan 2017). In General, his desired political system is a kind of religious populist democracy which has no official connection with clergies and consequently makes them out of any responsibility. In fact, it is the bitter lesson which Sistani took from the Iranian experience of 1979.

With all these considerations, it is not a pragmatic and actual assessment of Ali Amini, former prime minister of Shah, to count on moderate and ascetic Mullahs “who oppose clergy involvement in politics.” In 1986, Amini believed that the dissident clergies “will eventually gain the upper hand.” He refused both revolution and coup as a dangerous way of an exit from the chaos. On the contrary, Amini emphasized only the role of “politicians defending the interests of the middles class” to form an anti-Khomeini coalition “that will topple hard-line leftist clerics” (“Rivalry complicates Iranian exile struggle. ‘Monarchists’ and leftists disagree on goals and are internally split” 1986, para. 7). Nevertheless, it seems that the Shiite clerical establishment never thoroughly split because of inner confrontations in politics and the Islamic Republic will not reach on the verge of collapse due to the supposed resistance from moderate clergies.

Reassessing the Pahlavi conservatism, which is discussed more in section 4.1.3, let us not forget that the idea of Shiite expansionism has roots in the Pahlavi era. For example, Mohsen Pezeshpour (1927–2011),⁴⁶ the leader of the Pan-Iranist Party and a Member of Parliament, made a pro-Shiistic speech on 24 September 1978 due to the kidnapping of Imam Musa Sadr concluding that the pro-clerical prime minister Jafar Sharif Imami (1910–1998) and his cabinet has both religious and patriotic duty to find Sadr. “Because Iran is the only Shia country, and Shia Islam is the legal religion of this country, Iran has legal and ethical responsibilities to defend the Shia interests in each part of the world” (Reisinezhad 2019, p. 305). Nevertheless, it is vital to mention that the Pahlavi monarchy generally did not present such Shiite transnationalism in its regional and international policy. Unexpectedly, even the Shah of Iran was accused by “those who are anxious about stability in the Middle East” of making Iran’s

⁴⁶ During the Islamic Revolution, As Nikazmerad (1980) narrates, Pezeshkpour accused the government on television of conducting a “massacre” on 12 September 1978.

power under his monarchy a destabilizing factor in the long run, according to the analyzing report of Americans on 19 January 1977 (Byrne 2005, p. 44).

Concerning the possibility of forming a kind of alleged social contract after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, it needs to mention that the politically organized society could not violate the content of the social contract, which is the deed of the Islamic Republic during its ruling time till now. One of the apparent characteristics of these apologists is to use the peculiar terms of humanities in the exact contrary situation; there is a political system that has never considered Iranians as citizens but a mere part of the general Muslim community with the only obligation to obey the representatives of God. Conversely, a new fabricated term coined as a derivation from the original term, i.e. “social contract,” demanding the birth of a new era between Iranians and the Islamic regime while all the violations against their civil rights and all the discriminations are remained as before. The sanctity of the very “social contract’s nature” makes it impossible to claim such a thing while the “state” continually breaks the social bond and violates its fundamental contents. Put another way; there is no meaning to build a social contract between a master and slaves, which is a pure command from one side and a pure devotion from the other. This kind of applying the related-humanities terms to justify the totalitarian regimes is self-contradictory and self-destructive. The “social contract” is a precise term in the history of political thought and has specific prerequisites which all are absent in the Iranian political system after the Islamic Revolution.

Put simply, the social contract is connected with the public justification, which means a nation firstly should determine whether or not a given regime is legitimate and therefore worthy of loyalty. It is also distinctive to remind that the purpose of any social contract is to constitute “good sovereignty” (D’Agostino 1996). The example of the Islamic Republic of Iran proves that the mentioned regime has seen itself discharged and free from all the obligations even related to its own discriminative constitution as a Shiite state. It means, when the Islamic Republic perceives that being loyal to its discriminative constitution does not meet the current interests, the so-called constitution will be violated immediately by rulers in order to apply more discrimination on society because the constitution is not enough to defend the governmental safety.⁴⁷ The ruling clergies never

⁴⁷ As the most important case which is connected to the violation against humanity, the Islamic Republic executed thousands of Iranian political prisoners in the summer of 1988 who were spending their conviction rates and some of them were at the end of it and must be released from prison instead of being executed (*An International People’s Tribunal: JUDGMENT on 5th February 2013/A Case Concerning the Gross Violations of Human Rights and Commission of Crimes Against Humanity by the Islamic Republic of Iran* 2013).

respect their own laws, what about the human rights which are the basis of any social contract. The self-destructive approach of the Islamic Republic to violate its own rules is based on the political theology of Ayatollah Khomeini when he asserted that the Islamic government has the right to cancel the social contract in a one-sided way.

All we are obliged to protect the interests of Islam and because the most important duties is to preserve the Islamic system if there is a conflict in practice between it and the other religious orders placed sentences must be sacrificed in the province. In this regard, he stated that the government is one of the basic commandments of Islam and first of all Secondary Rules, even prayer, fasting and pilgrimage, the legal contracts can [*sic*] be revoke that are related to the public when the contract is against the interests of the country and Islam unilaterally. (Samaei SahnehSaraei et al. 2016, p. 111)

The challenge that every political system faces is whether people have the capability of establishing a good government or not. Human rights are about the universal values which are constituted to protect people from political and social oppression, and it does not matter whether these abuses become legalized or not. The issue is to discuss the conditions which make sovereignty legitimate. Otherwise, all the totalitarian and despotic systems are actualized some conventional rules of sovereignty like being recognized as a juridical independent territorial entity with the exclusion of any external source of authority from the domestic territory. Sovereignty has diverse elements, and having just some of the attributes brings no necessity to have the whole characteristics. Therefore, the sovereignty is not a simple and lifetime package of some separable components and only a state with all of the indispensable parts can gain legitimacy, like being aligned to a set of common domestic and international norms or pursuing the public good of the citizens and has an expected function and effectiveness. Sovereignty is the conceptual basis upon which a ruling system can be legitimized as a state. Neglecting the necessity of the effective influence and constructive function of a given state power leads to the danger of destabilizing the whole body politic and the geopolitical circumstances of its region (Heller and Sofaer 2001).

To build sovereignty in accord with human rights, citizens have to be well empowered to constitute a good state by the collective reflections and national choice. In the case of the Islamic Revolution and what occurred during the vital three years after, there is no evidence to prove the existence of the free choice of Iranians. The revolutionaries and their leader Khomeini dominated the whole referendum by constant and intense propaganda to achieve their own desired result. The so-called referendum had only and exclusively one alternative, i.e.,

the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the revolutionaries claimed 98.2% of eligible citizens approved it (Hiro 2013). The charismatic leader of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, advised the nation to vote for the Islamic Republic undoubtedly. Khomeini used the entire of his charismatic influence to present his own preference as the only true religious and national choice by saying “the Islamic Republic, not one word less, not one word more.” As a charismatic leader, his emphasis on the future regime in Iran was determining rhetoric against those who opposed his referendum. He justified his speech act with a revivalist approach that Islam “has all the advantage of a democracy and even more” (Jahanbakhsh 2001, p. 135). The charismatic narrow-minded religious leader “could not imagine a third way” (Seyedin 2015, p. 128). Therefore, people had only two choices: vote on the Islamic Republic or vote against it. According to Amir Arjomand (2012), Khomeini was wisely cautious to reveal his political agenda too soon, which was to embody the Shiite jurisprudence into the post-monarchic constitution. Before the victory of the Revolution, he used only “Islamic government” (*hokumat-e eslāmi*) and his disciples followed him to not mention his theory of *wilāyat-i faqih* during the revolutionary rage against the monarchy. Amir Arjomand assumes that his refusal to use the word “republic” (*jomhuri*) is a reasonable fact that demonstrates his political motivation to consider the Islamic Republic as a ruling system that is ultimately aimed to serve the theocracy (p. 26). At the time of the referendum on the 1979 Constitution, all these assumptions are being confirmed by a direct utterance from Ayatollah Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti, the prominent member of the Council of the Islamic Revolution. Beheshti expressed that the “good” and “expressive” slogan of the “Islamic government” was called later the “Islamic Republic” only due to its agreed element of the presidency. However, “the true and perfect name for this regime is the ‘regime of the umma and Imamate’ (*nezām-e ommat va emāmat*)” (Amir Arjomand 2012, p. 26).

There were considerable boycotts, objections, criticism, and denouncement about the way of running the referendum and also alleged massive election fraud before and after it. On the contrary, Khomeini proclaimed the establishment of the Islamic Republic, “calling it ‘the first day of government by God’” (Nikazmerad 1980, p. 353). However, revolutionaries never respected human rights before the revolution, after it, and during all these years since 1979. The conformity with the religious authority which took hold of the sovereignty later⁴⁸ led the Iranians to a

⁴⁸ His leadership was against his repeating promise to the nation and also Western interviewers when he stayed in Paris before returning to the country. In an interview with *Time Magazine* on the 21 December 1978, Khomeini clearly accepted that he does not tend to gain power.

new and complicated era of totalitarianism. The emergence of the Islamic regime is a clear example of people who destined themselves to depend for forming their own political constitution mostly on coincidence, hatred, and devotion. The coalition of the majority of revolutionaries and political figures in favor of the so-called referendum did not let the people have free discussions and public conversations in the media and public sphere for understanding and also criticizing the vague term of “the Islamic Republic” which strongly supported by Ayatollah Khomeini and his allies from Islamists to leftists. Being in a rush to run the referendum in an unstable political situation and thoroughly disordered and chaotic atmosphere of Iran due to the collapsing the Pahlavi monarchy, had only one goal; put a democratic surface on the upcoming religious dictatorship and use it as a justifying instrument to cover their lack of legitimacy. In almost four decades after the referendum, the clerics and their bureaucrats always referred to it and afterward elections in response to the whole world watching their violations of civil rights and international treaties.

On 24 April 1989, while Ayatollah Khomeini was on his deathbed, he appointed a 25-man “Council for the Revision of the Constitution.” The discussion between appointed clergies went on during April-May 1989. After the compilation of the revisional process, a constitutional referendum was held in Iran on 28 July 1989. The government announced a similar result of the early referendum in 1979; 97.6% of Iranian voters approved the amendments. It was the first, and so far only time the Constitution of the Islamic Republic has been amended. The result of the Constitutional Amendments of 1989 was to make the former constitution more aligned with the absolutist interpretation of *wilāyat-i faqih*. As Amir Arjomand (2012) illustrates, “the provisions for a Leadership Council to fulfill the function of the Jurist, which also mentioned *marjaiyyat*, were eliminated in the amended Articles 5 and 107” (p. 39). To eliminate the Leadership Council, they concluded that a collective form of guardianship has no ground in Islamic jurisprudence and is incompatible with the authority of *walī-i faqih* as the legitimate ruler. Therefore, while Khomeini was still alive, members of the Review Assembly asked his permission to eliminate it, and he agreed. By removing the possibility of collective guardianship of the Jurist, they made *wilāyat-i faqih* to be confined to only personal leadership. As Amir Arjomand explains, “the powers of Leadership were to be concentrated in a single person, as were the Executive and Judiciary Powers” (p. 39). To eliminate the qualification of *marjaiyyat* from the prerequisite of a given guardian jurist, they claimed that concerning the governmental problems is the first priority to be eligible for occupying the position of the Leader. In comparison, dealing with the explanation of the *shar'i* commandments of God is not the essential specialty of the Leader.

The change was crucial to shift the *wilāyat-i faqih* from *wilāyat-i feqh*, the juristic guardianship, to *wilāyat-i siyāsi*, the political guardianship. It gave superiority to the politics other than the jurisprudence, and this vital shift is capable of being derived from the political theology of Khomeini.

The fact that not only the *marja'iyyat* but also the qualification of “*ejteḥād motlaq*” was at the last minute omitted for the Leader is surely indicative of the incompatibility of the old and the new Shi'ite theories of authority. (Amir Arjomand 2012, p. 222)

It is crucial to focus on the nature of moral and political rules, which are rationally justified in order to understand the irreconcilable entity of social contract and the Shiite sovereignty. Any kind of justification is made by a rational agreement. Individuals in each society, based on their personal reasoning, would agree to some rules or principles, but it is not necessarily a social contract. Individuals, by their own reasons, have agreed on some principles which could not lie under the “good reasons.” The logical point is that any social contract is an agreement, but the reverse side of the formula is not intrinsically correct; not any agreement is a social contract. Persons, based on collective rationality, give part of their rights to the political system and instead take the constitutional and legislative guarantee for their liberties within the desired framework and that is the social contract which is thoroughly inconsistent with a sectarian partnership like the Islamic Republic of Iran. As some liberal theorists like Popper suggest, “the only free social relations are contractual ones and that only a society based upon a contract by its members, or at least upon their tacit consent, can be a ‘just’ society” (Marcuse and Popper 1985, p. 3).

In the first decade after the revolution, they changed the whole bureaucratic system, rebuilt it by unknown Islamic values in the banking system, and made intensive propaganda about the Islamic economy which is vague and undetermined till now. They did the same to the educational system with gender segregation and obligatory Islamic veil for any woman in the country, including those who came to the school and university. They placed middle-level clerics in various ministries, including one which related to education. After Iran–Iraq War (1988) and Khomeini's death (1989) Iran faced the public demands of administrative reform to flourish the economy, open the internal politics, and improve the international relationships. Although, those demands did not succeed in any mentioned area. The economy could not progress with the intentions in their international policy and also with continuous oppression of any discontent. They also assassinated their opponents in Europe and other parts of the world during the presidential time of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989–1997) who was

in office from 1989 till 1997. "Throughout the 1990 s Iran flirted with reform and experienced factional struggles, assassinations and murders, oppression. The regime resembled a clerical feudalism with a complex set of patronage–client relations colored by personalistic politics" (Sanasarian 2000, p. 18).

1997 was the first controversial shift in the approach of those who later called themselves "reformists" within the Islamic regime. Clerics in Iran mostly picture their political stand as a divine gift, and then they add the claimed mass support as a national backing of their religious power by the "majority" of the population which is nothing more than a Shiite populism. After the election of the fifth president, Mohammad Khatami, the signs for changing in the discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran started. Thenceforth, the so-called "reformists" insist on the meaningfulness of the democratic values within a theocratic framework which is one of the most paradoxical claims with opposite results in contemporary Iranian politics. Moreover, Khatami pictured himself as a religious intellectual who believed that "there is more than one valid reading of Islam" (Amir Arjomand 2012, p. 82).

Was that historical chance that became well-known as "the reform era" such an appropriate occasion to transform an anti-Western Islamic structure to a democratic and liberal way of ruling? After more than two decades, the answer is undeniably clear. In the first years of Khatami's presidential period, there was an opportunity to open the gate of politics and put an end to the ideology of Ayatollah Khomeini along with his anti-Shah coalition at the birth of the Islamic Republic. However, the supreme leader and its governmental, security, and military arms started an oppressive resistance against the newborn hopes that came mostly out of the very Iranian society than a specific political party within the system.

The elected president, which became the symbol of social discontent took no practical step to stop the severe governmental reaction in front of a peaceful civil society with legal and legitimate demands. Therefore, Khatami did not represent certainly "a sympathetic government" in the whole of his presidential period. Instead of diminishing "risk of repression and facilitates collective and organized mobilization," he chose to stand on the side of governmental interest instead of his voters who demanded real change in the way of ruling. The wise and cautious mechanism of repression, which combines the controlled quantity of its victims with the brutal quality of victimizing, was set up against civil society between 1997 and 2005. Cumulatively, Khatami with his political coalition known as "reformists" naturalized the mentioned mechanism during his presidency, the period of Ahmadinejad (2005–2013), the Iranian Green Movement

(13 June 2009–12 June 2010), and peculiarly in the time of the cabinet of Hassan Rouhani (3 August 2013–) which is full of security forces as ministers and other officials. The same political coalition labeled the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) for sixteen years (1989–2005) as the “moderate figure” and his cabinet as the “government of rationality and hope.” This kind of propaganda spread by the international institutions to convince the West that “reformist forces... seek to normalize relations with ... the world powers and implement some domestic reforms, while Supreme Leader ... and the unelected establishment remains committed to revolutionary principles and a status quo necessary to maintain their hold on power” (Nader et al. 2017, p. 1). The mentioned description is a unique phrase to collect contradictory narration of the Islamic Republic against the reality of politics in Iran.

4.3.2 The Green Movement of 2009 and the Patriotic Uprisings since 2018: The Replacement of Discourse and Leadership

In the short time of an intensive Iranian Green Movement, the main leader of protesters, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, presented himself as a new resurrected version of a revolutionary leader who wants justice and freedom under the religious and ideological framework of Revolution 1979. He even attributed “Pharaoh” as a normative statement for the speeches and reactions of the supreme leader to the protests after the disputable presidential election of 2009. He meant that Ayatollah Khamenei acted like the ancient Egyptian ruler who has a negative image in the Quran and the other Islamic sources as a symbol of an infidel despot who claimed divinity in contrary to the alleged true God.⁴⁹ In this regard, Wat Mousavi said was a radical criticism against Ayatollah Khamenei. However, all the religious rhetoric against religious despotism was oriented in the way of justifying the Islamic Revolution and the whole controversial decade of Khomeini as the founder of the Islamic Republic. In other words, all the “reformists” and Mousavi wanted was to reverse the situation after the death of Khomeini, but supposedly with more respect and attention to the civil demands of Iranians. Mousavi represented the Revolution of 1979 and its leader in a new form of political

⁴⁹ “Pharaoh denied and disobeyed. Then he turned his back, striving. And he gathered [his people] and called out and said, “I am your most exalted lord.” So Allah seized him in exemplary punishment for the last and the first [transgression]” (“The Noble Quran” n.d., v. 79: 21–25).

Islam which tries to be more rational and more justice. The foundations of anti-Pahlavi ideology, anti-Western attitude, and anti-American sensations remained mainly the same. As an obvious example, on 4 January 2011, shocking news hurt the feelings of Iranians all around the world and even some of the anti-Shah figures sent their sympathy and condolences regarding the tragic event of the suicide of Prince Alireza Pahlavi (1966–2011), the younger son of the Pahlavi Imperial Family. Mir-Hossein Mousavi (2011) immediately and intentionally used the governmental phrase of “the despicable Pahlavi family” in an interview on 11 January 2011. This reaction from Mousavi was clearly due to his concerns about rising any probable pro-Pahlavi sensations in Iranian society. He wanted to keep the political competitions inside the closed circle of figures belong to the Islamic Republic. Nevertheless, many of the emotional expressions following the death of Prince Alireza Pahlavi was more moral, wistful, and apolitical. However, Mousavi had a meaningful fear that all these affections go into politics and form pro-Pahlavi demonstrators against his own new interpretation of the anti-Pahlavi revolution in 1979. Put another way, there were two possible kinds of wistful emotions in the society that could form two different political movements: the wistfulness of a lost revolution in 1979 and the wistfulness of a lost monarchy before 1979. Mousavi (with all of his historic chance to be a political leader in 2009) was the representative of the first nostalgia not the latter.

The unprecedented uprising in January 2018 over almost a hundred cities in Iran with many pro-Pahlavi slogans like “Long Live the King!”, “Happy Birthday the Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi”, “O, Shah of Iran, Return Back to Iran”, “Iran Lacks a Shah, Why There is No Order⁵⁰ in the Country” and “King of Kings, Rest in Peace” showed that Mir-Hossein Mousavi’s concern in 2009 was not so far from the probable resurrection of pro-monarchic sensations. There is an intensive discussion in the Iranian atmosphere about the best possible connotations of this kind of slogan. Do these pro-Pahlavi slogans necessarily refer to the demand of resurrecting monarchy? Is it possible to interpret the mentioned slogans to a specific desired way of ruling before 1979 which is remarkable mainly for its unique historical standpoint between the failed traditional Qajar monarchy

⁵⁰ Usually, when Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized the existence of something in the political world, it means that the mentioned thing only exists in the world of the supreme leader. For example, he insists to deny the conflict between the Islamic Revolution and the socio-political order. Khamenei (2019) claims that the Islamic Republic “has never suffered from, and will never suffer from stagnation and recession, and it does not see any conflict and contradiction between revolutionary dynamism and political and social order; rather, it eternally defends the theory of the revolutionary system” (para. 7).

and the failed totalitarian theocracy of the Islamic Republic? The Pahlavi standpoint in contemporary Iranian history can lie under the known category of “good sovereignty” except for its undemocratic element as an autocracy.

Despite all the opposite statistics on the eve of the revolution about the public welfare vs lack of electricity in villages or the improvement of the life between middle classes vs increased regional inequalities, or the educational achievement vs the high percentage of illiterates, the common sense of people who involved in the incidents of 1979 and the new generation who born after that year, is in favor of the overthrown regime. For example, they believe that corruption before 1979 is incomparable to the current situation under the Islamic Republic⁵¹ and that they could have a much better future if the Islamic Revolution had not happened. There is also a neglected historical insight about these statistics which claimed that Iran under the Shah was “one of the most egalitarian societies in the world,” Abrahamian (1982) wrote (p. 448). His attribution to the Pahlavi monarchy is the academic form of what Reza Baraheni claims in a notorious literary expression that “the country was in the hands of monarchic savagery” (Baraheni 1995, p. 55). Abrahamian, in his later work, attributes quite the opposite characteristics to the Islamic Republic, denying the possibility to categorize it under failed states. He claims that the Islamic Republic is no longer part of the Third World, due to the distribution of oil revenues, which has brought citizens “a respectable standard of living” (Abrahamian 2008, p. 194). With a similar approach, it is articulated that “the Islamic state distributed wealth and provided social welfare to the majority of the population” and thus it has empowered Iranian women with Islamic feminist demands and that the Shah only aimed to improve the life of “a small elite” (Rostami-Povey 2012, p. 25). However, the legacy of the Shah lies in the fact that “Iran under the shah [*sic*] was stable, prospering, and at peace with its neighbors” (Cooper 2018, para. 20). Relatedly, the published American documents are clear that “Iran’s economy is developing impressively. Even before the 1973 oil price hike, the GNP was growing at an average rate of 11 percent” (Byrne 2005, p. 50). Khavand (2018), the French-Iranian economist, describes the early 1960 s to mid-1970 s as the “golden 15 years” of a dynamic economy despite all of its defects. Khavand illustrates that the Islamic Republic ignores “the collapse of the country’s national economy” and that “the most tangible consequence of this economic decline is a drop in living standards for Iranians” (paras. 2, 13, 18). According to the latest international reports, the inequality level in Iran is higher

⁵¹ As Corruptions Perceptions Index (2018) gives numbers from 0 to 100, where 100 is the worst index. The official value for Iran is given as 28 points in 2018. With this result evaluated by Transparency International, Iran ranks 138rd among 180 countries. Therefore, in comparison to other countries, it is considerably below the average.

than countries such as Pakistan and Iraq. The systematic corruption in Iran makes the Islamic Republic 90 steps more corrupt than Ruanda and 115 steps more corrupt than the United Arab Emirates (Khavand 2019).

Avoiding any anachronism, the main patriotic plan of Pahlavi to develop the country should assume to be extended during the late forty years and then compare the similar statistics in the Islamic Republic to the former regime. In other words, all the problems at the point of 1979 could not be compared to all the developments in the point of 2019. The revolutionaries received a wealthy and well-planned bureaucratic structure with a relatively stable economy and a high-equipped national army. A probable question in this matter can be formulated as follows: How would be the current economic situation of Iran ("26 Million Iranians Suffer Absolute Poverty, Says Prominent Economist" 2018), if the revolutionary government did not spend huge costs to export its Shiite and anti-Western ideology to the Middle East, Africa, Europe and other parts of the world? A recent survey⁵² seems to be persuasive that the Islamic Republic lost its social support along with illegitimacy due to violating democratic values. Although the majority of Iranians are against the current regime, the monarchy also has the support of almost 20 percent of the population.

Amongst 17 figures renowned for political or civil rights activity, Reza Pahlavi enjoys the highest popularity with 37.9%. He is followed by Nasrin Sotoudeh with 8.1%, whereas Mir Hossein Moussavi obtains 4.6% popularity. Although almost 38% of Iranians would give a chance to Reza Pahlavi, only 15% of Iranians would favour a constitutional monarchy. It could be deduced that support for Reza Pahlavi does not necessarily translate for support for monarchy. On the question of (symbolic) political parties in a free election, a monarchist party would garner 20.1% of the votes ... It seems that no single party or political ideology enjoys the majority amongst Iranians. (A. Maleki 2018, p. 2)

It means that most of the pro-Pahlavi slogans are only modern demands which can be met in the form of all known political systems based on democratic values and secular principles. The latter interpretation is thoughtful but also controversial or is fragile to be justified for the pro-monarchic part of Iranian society. The very Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi insists only on his temporal mission and historical obligation to put an end to the political inheritance of Ayatollah Khomeini by civil disobedience, nonviolent resistance, national strikes, and the international support for the protestors with maintaining the actual independence of the nation. "My ambition is to liberate Iran. ... My focus is on revitalizing and reinvigorating

⁵² Barati (2018) articulates a brief explanation of the survey in German.

my country. This regime has attempted to destroy it for forty years. So first we will rebuild it for our citizens so that they can once again live in dignity” (R. Pahlavi 2019b, paras. 14, 18). He also emphasized the “controlled way of overthrowing” the Islamic Republic “to prevent anarchy.” In this regard, he asserts on opening the possible way for military forces, includes IRGC junior ranks, to come back to their people and support demonstrations instead of suppressing them.⁵³ Nevertheless, the day after the Islamic regime is in the hands of the people and is up to the free referendum to choose the next political structure.

Expectedly, the Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi after the uprisings of January 2018 has become the target of two similar propaganda from the Islamic Regime and the classic anti-Shah opposition in order to demoralize him and pro-Pahlavi slogans under the title of “the try to resurrect his father’s dictatorship”, and by appealing to the ideological term *estebdād-e shaikh va Shah* (the despotism of clergy and the Shah). The mentioned term equates the rulers of the Pahlavi era with the hierocracy after 1979. The excuse to attack him from the classic opposition to his father was even to deny some slogans of Iranian protesters, because of its patriotic tone and because of being cited in an article of the Crown Prince. In his article, Reza Pahlavi (2018) emphasized on the historical connotations and actual meaning of the shouted demand “Iranians want our country back” and while he dedicated the article to one of the martyrs, i.e., Reza Otadi. Some intellectuals related to the anti-Shah opposition smelled “the smell of blood” (*būy-ie khūn*) from the read of Reza Pahlavi and accused him of building a secular fascist movement in order to bring the throne back to his royal family (Nikfar 2018). Expectedly, the same Iranian leftist intellectuals had sympathy toward the two previous presidential campaign under the Islamic Republic, while advising readers not to judge the people who participated in those elections and not to use radical words like “the show of democracy” in order to understand the reason of social activities in a phenomenological way, which needs perceiving the reality with no a priori label. Nevertheless, all of those cautious intellectual reflections disappeared when January uprisings took place, and pro-Pahlavi slogans heard in the streets.

The very standpoint of Reza Pahlavi is controversial and somehow seems paradoxical; he inherited a tradition of modernization that was not democratic but had an irreversible influence on Iran and Iranians, while he wants to separate the benevolent part of the pre-1979 history from the despotic part of it. In other words, the small circle of eligible elites who developed Iran during the time of

⁵³ The last one who chose this kind of rhetoric with IRGC force was Mir-Hossein Mousavi in the time of the Green Movement and he failed to gain support from them or he did not want to form a strong coalition against the supreme leader.

his Royal Family ultimately ended up with the rise of clerical totalitarianism. As a lesson from history, the next try must be to build a nation-state by means of a democratic benevolent body politic. Notwithstanding, using the Pahlavi tradition to build such a future is intrinsically a fragile position and sometimes a self-destructive standpoint due to its disputable characteristic as an autocratic political heritage. Nevertheless, all of the supposed contradictions of the Crown Prince do not mean that the Iranian civil society can be considered thoroughly in a separation from a given political leadership (Khalaji 2019). The empowerment of the Iranian civil society remains an enthusiastic pulpit if it does not consider the power of the Shiite hierocracy to mobilize it and to demonize any alternative. Encouraging foreign forces to support the Iranian civil society at the expense of nullifying Pahlavis will be disruptive for both social dynamics and political alternatives.

The complexity to be an heir of a benevolent dictatorship and to be an advocate of a benevolent democracy, motivated some of the monarchists to advise Reza Pahlavi to choose a firm and clear political standpoint as the “legitimate” iconic figure of the constitutional monarchy who fight for the liberty of his land. First, some legitimacies have no such a decisive border with popularity, and it does not mean that the supposed legitimate one is already elected or rules on the chosen constitution by the people. Secondly and in that connection, the mentioned continuous legitimacy is based on inheritance, tradition, history, and also the disputable referendum of the Islamic Republic on 2–3 December 1979 and withdrawal of the constitution of 1906 by planned violence during the turmoil of 1978–9 and massive executions after the victory. It is, in general, a question of legitimacy that has been brought by a revolution in front of legitimacy that has been inherited by a tradition. In the case of Iran, none of those legitimacies are democratic. A mere revolution, in itself, cannot make a certain newly-established system democratic or legitimate. The legitimacy and democracy are based on the rule of law, human rights, socio-political freedom, and ultimately free referendum. None of them could be found in 1979. Nevertheless, the mentioned advice has also its own disadvantage due to a claim of being the symbol of a constitutional monarchy which hardly could be recognized in the time of the Pahlavi monarchy. When a political figure claims the inheritance of something that had rare roots in the past, he puts the public and peculiarly the middle class in the position of being a skeptic to accept the claim. Seemingly, there are many causes of distrustfulness in Iranian atmosphere, and the Shiite hierocracy uses this defect in favor of his further ruling. However, the Crown Prince has chosen a middle standpoint to present himself as a symbol of the monarchic tradition and to defend the right of a free referendum in Iran. He likely prefers the republican system personally,

but he believes that the monarchy in Iran can bring stability, national unity, and territorial integrity more than republicanism. He mentions his own previous rejection for the tempting proposal of republican opposition who wanted him to leave the idea of monarchy and promised him to be announced as the first president after the Islamic Republic (R. Pahlavi n.d.). However, the political standing of Reza Pahlavi is an undetermined position between the departure from monarchic past and the preservation of it.

My sole focus at this time is for Iran to be free so that the Iranian people, once free to choose for themselves, can decide their own fate and their own future ... In the streets the younger generation shout my father's name. On the walls the youth glorify my grandfather's memory. They recognize the immense contributions that each made in building our nation. (R. Pahlavi 2019b, paras. 14, 16)

Relating to the relation between religion and politics in the time of the Iranian Green Movement, Mir-Hossein Mousavi neglected the longstanding bad sovereignty started from the next morning of 11 January 1979 till that time and expected to defeat the failed government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as Mousavi and all the "reformists" tried to represent him as the main problem of the country. The mentioned religious reformist rhetoric of him in his political declarations and speeches combined with this narrow demands of bureaucratic reforms with occasionally pointing the judicial injustice and military corruptions of IRGC as just a catalyst to fortify his paradoxical standpoint. The bureaucratic problems in the executive part of the Islamic Republic were just a surface that came out from a profound failure to build Shiite sovereignty in 1979 and Mousavi could not recognize it due to his ideological loyalty. Symbolizing the leaders of the Green Movement, they were fit precisely within the theoretical framework of the current thesis, that is to say, a former prime minister (1981–1989), a former speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and the wife of Mousavi, Zahra Rahnavard (1945–), as an extra Islamist feminine figure. Therefore, The Green Movement had a politician with a non-Western suit, without a tie, and a politician with an official religious custom; it was an iconic mixture of bureaucratic and religious reforms; a non-cleric politician demanded religious reforms and a cleric politician demanded bureaucratic reforms. There was only one but fundamental problem; both figures had been still attached to the Revolution 1979 in general and had devoted themselves to the disputable first decade of the Islamic Republic under the charismatic leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. They always emphasized the violations against human rights during the reign of the current

supreme leader and never took an honest and courageous political position to criticize their own time of responsibility under the founder of the Islamic Republic. For, “the arrests and executions” in the time of Khomeini were also “politically motivated and unconstitutional” in an incomparable way to his successor (Sahimi 2010, para. 68). A group of secular intellectuals in the Iranian diaspora published a signed declaration on 21 January 2010 warned about the evident adherence of “reformists” to the political inheritance of Khomeini and declared their concerns about the probable failure of a democratic and secular movement due to the ideological preference of its leaders over the legitimate demands of protestors (“Hoshdār-e Goruhy az Roshānfekran-e Irani dar mored-e Sarnevesht-e Jonbesh-e Sabz/ The warning of some Iranian intellectuals about the future of the Green Movement” 2010). Nevertheless, The over ideological self-confidence of the then leaders made them neglect all such worries in particular and overshadow the secular part of the Green Movement in general.

The mentioned political couple, Mousavi and Rahnavard, were followers of the Islamic utopian ideas of Ali Shariati (1933–1977), who is considered as one the main ideologue of Revolution 1979. As an indication of the anti-Shah orientation between scholars, it should be pointed out that Abrahamian claimed in his article *The Opposition Forces* that Shariati “was murdered by SAVAK in 1977” (Abrahamian 1979b, p. 6). There is no proof or official statement about the governmental involvement in his death, and Abrahamian gives no reference for his claim. As Abedi (1986) narrates, “The British authorities ruled that he had died of a massive heart attack; his supporters refused to believe anything short of the shah’s secret police involvement” (p. 232). Abedi mentions the popular belief during the Pahlavi dynasty that the government was considered responsible for many “mysterious death” of different figures. Ali Shariati combined all the possible ideas like Islamism, Socialism, and Existentialism with a deformed read of the related sources. He presented his own selective and arbitrary understanding of all Islamic and Western thoughts most passionately in his speeches in order to provide an anti-Western ideology. According to his own claims, Ali Shariati studied under Georges Gurvitch (1894–1965), the Russian-born French sociologist, and was influenced by some of his ideas (Abedi 1986, p. 230). Allegedly, he learned from Gurvitch that religion has an undeniable importance in any popular culture and “could function as an ideological tool of the suppressed to fight their oppressors” (Rakel 2008, p. 115). His Marxism and his Shiism shaped his revolutionary ideology which vanishes all the differences between theoretical schools and removes all the conceptual boundaries between separate terminologies in his magical pot to produce only one product, i.e., the legitimacy of the rebellion. In this regard, Ali Shariati was a remarkable figure who promoted political Islam by

representing Muhammad and his cousin Ali, the first Shia Imam, as revolutionaries and the very religion as rebellious teachings and by importing the religious concepts into the contemporary international issues. Therefore, he found the first socialist figure of human history in the early Islamic one; as if a modern concept was thousand years ago embodied in the body of an old, poor, and pious follower of Muhammad (Al-Saif 2017, p. 272). His fatalism and his faith in the human will are also a part of his mutual belief in Shiite resistance against Sunni Caliphates and Western existential voluntarism (p. 274).

According to Shari'ati the role of the Prophet was to establish an *ummah* that would be in a "permanent" revolution (*enqelab-e daemi*), striving for a classless society ... Shari'ati distinguished between Alavi Shi'ism and Safavi Shi'ism. Alavi Shi'ism is a dynamic libertarian religion against repression, exploitation, and despotism, in which the people have the right to choose their leaders. The Safavi Shi'ism to the contrary is conservative. (Rakel 2008, p. 115)

Mir-Hossein Mousavi has followed Shariati's teachings on the authenticity of Alavi Shiism in front of an official and despotic Shiism in the Safavid dynasty. However, it is a historical fact and speculative barrier in front of the mentioned differentiation between two kinds of Shiism. Without bringing Shia Islam into the then Sunni Iranian society by tribal military forces of Shāh Ismā'il I (r. 1501–24), the founder of the Safavid dynasty, there was no chance for Ali Shariati to make his impressive speeches about the anti-Safavid kind of Shiism, which is not still theoretically well expressed by his followers. In other words, Ali Shariati and all the revolutionaries who were inspired by him neglected *the will to the power* in the whole history of Shiism. Ironically, the idealistic image of justice in the Shiite sensation of Ali Shariati led to form a Shiite tyranny, i.e., the Islamic Republic, which is incomparable⁵⁴ to his bad model of Safavid Shiism by dissipating massive human and natural sources of Iran in only four decades. Safavid rulers indeed made Shia Islam the official religion of the Persian Empire and "The clerics and their staff enjoyed political strength and relative stability" (Abisaab 2004, p. 97). However, the legacy of the Safavid dynasty lies mainly in renewing the

⁵⁴ In accordance, the obsessive interest of the current supreme leader which leads to usual referring to the praised Safavid Empire as the inspiration of the Shiite hierocracy in Iran is irrelevant and is based more on his personal wishes than the reality of the Islamic Republic (Khamenei 2018). The historical lesson is simple to be learned that not all Shiite elements in the different body politic are the same. In most fields, the traditional and conservative Safavid dynasty between the 16th and 18th centuries is completely different from the Islamic Republic.

Persian political system and the establishment of a proficient bureaucratic structure with a flourishing economy and the stability of the empire (p. 90). Mousavi was inspired by a so-called Alavi Shiite resistance to the power and cooperated in establishing a hierocratic Shiite power, and it is the ironic moment of all the motivated Islamic fight for freedom to transform it into an Islamic will to form an oppressive power. Religiosity is a specific spiritual emotion without an inalienable socio-political framework, although it is, in itself, an absolute and metaphysical personal belief. The first step to giving it such a framework is to make a religious ideology under the name of freedom and justice. The next steps are even easier; mass support of believers, transform all absolute personal religiosity to collective absolutism in public and ultimately bring it to power as a theocracy. It is the paradoxical role of Ali Shariati and his followers, such as Mousavi and Rahnavard, to realize the Islamic Revolution.

There is another issue about Mousavi and Rahnavard in their short political sparkle that has a connection with their appraisal of the public nostalgia of the Pahlavi era. After decades of high Islamic pressure on the social and private life of Iranians and taking all the social freedom and women rights that people had before 1979, the mentioned political couple tried to express themselves in the political campaign as a loving couple. Accordingly, Mousavi gave the hand of his wife in one of his electoral speeches and the captured image worked as shocking news in Iran and attracted many youths who had never chance to see such a simple loving scene in Cinemas after Islamizing the art by the efforts of Khomeini and his followers included very Mousavi and Rahnavard. The mentioned political gesture was unprecedented in the Islamic Republic, for all the politicians had hidden their wives before that time. The normal behavior between presidents, ministers, members of the Islamic assembly, and other political ranks was to not engage their women in public, according to the Islamic matrimony that segregates the public and the private. The men can participate in both the public and the private, while women can participate mostly in private, and there are many limitations derived from Sharia about their social presence. Mousavi and Rahnavard were both supporters of Islamizing the public and confining female participation in the Iranian society in accord with the Islamic and anti-Western ideology of Ayatollah Khomeini. Specifically, Rahnavard “extols women’s oppression under the guise of treachly Islamic piety” in his books and allegedly she had the leading role in running one of the first Islamic police units to enforce Hijab on women in the public sphere (Bostom 2009, p. 19). Rahnavard, as an Islamist, illustrates her sense of hatred against the West and expresses her simplistic views against the Shah in the same way. She is clear to use hijab “as a weapon against the Imperialist plunderers”, and she believes that the social freedom of women under

the Shah's reign was exactly due to his "satanic" purpose of serving the imperialist forces (Rahnavard 2015, pp. 24, 25). A few months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Rahnavard justifies the Sharia laws by categorizing them in the anti-capitalist approach and by accusing the West to instrumentalize women and their feminine beauty (Ina Histoire 1979). The mentioned analysis in accord with the thoughts of her revolutionary master Ali Shariati.

As a political tactic during the Green Movement, Mousavi and Rahnavard decided to break the Islamic behavior which became normalized after 1979 in order to gain more support from Iranians and peculiarly from the youths who have modern cultural tendencies and their way of life is mainly different from the Islamic norms of the Shiite hierocracy. In other words, they wanted to captivate Iranian youths and determine it in a somehow mild political Islam. Cumulatively, Mousavi and Rahnavard tried to imitate the gesture of the Shah and Shahbanu, the King and the Princess, in an Islamic form. It was a sign that the "reformist" leaders of the Green Movement were aware of the cultural importance of the Pahlavi era. They knew the fundamental transformation in Iranian culture which is contrary to the official cleansing plan, called the "Cultural Revolution" in the time of Khomeini and then "Struggle against Western cultural invasion" and the widespread promotion of the "Islamic way of life" in the time of the current supreme leader.

Relating to section 3.4 about the relationship of aesthetics and politics, it is worth mentioning the political beauty of Empress Farah Pahlavi in comparison to the Islamic imitation by Zahra Rahnavard who participated in applying all the Islamic restrictions in the life of Iranian women. The problem is the lack of social self-consciousness about the importance of the feminine elements in the Pahlavi monarchy due to its autocracy and its detached nobleness from the Iranian society. The advantage of Rahnavard and all the politicians in the Islamic Republic who tried to represent themselves different from the Shiite hierocratic criteria is that they find an already provided path to actualize a relative successful relation with the mass, thanks to the pseudo-republican part of the Islamic Republic which works to let people being engaged or receiving the sense of engagement in the narrow political scene with no result or with worse outcomes.

The demands of the Iranian people during the Green Movement went beyond any mere objections to a disputable election between adherents to the political inheritance of Khomeini. During all demonstrations in 2009, the people shouted many radical slogans against *wilāyat-i faqih* (the leadership of the Islamic jurist), Ayatollah Khamenei, and also the regional policy of the Islamic Republic to support Hezbollah and Hamas and other Islamic terrorist organizations. It was the first time that the slogan "Not Gaza, Not Lebanon, My Life for Iran" be

heard in the streets as a chauvinistic call against the regional policy after 1979. The most famous and iconic⁵⁵ martyr of the Green Movement, Neda Agha Soltan (1982–2009),⁵⁶ was a secular and feminine figure who did not vote in the then election, but when the “electoral” campaign went to an unpredictable phase of demonstrations against the Islamic Republic, she accompanied her people in the hope of getting rid of the regime. There were many of them like her in the social body of the mentioned political uprising in 2009. However, the leaders and the balance of power were not in favor of those secular and democratic purposes.

The Liberal-Conservative Elements in the Patriotic Uprisings since 2018; the pro-Pahlavi Deprived Class against the anti-Shah Leftist Elites

First of all, there is still an emended debate in the Iranian political atmosphere on analyzing the mentioned discontents in Iran through the categorization of social classes. In general, it seems through many factual pieces of evidence that the most engagement in the uprisings is belonged to the lower middle class and mostly to the lower class of the Iranian society. The existence of Persian nationalism and the “abandonment of cultural xenophobia toward the West” have been spread in various social classes (Boroujerdi 2001, p. 18), but the pro-Pahlavi slogans mainly came out of the working class who suffer from unemployment, financial insecurity, and unpaid salaries for several months. The lack of financial stability is a common challenge for all the Iranian social classes, except those who have an accountable tie with the government. However, the variations of poverty, lack of financial ability, and being deprived of welfare are incomparable, e.g., between the lower middle class and lower class. Mehrzad Boroujerdi indicated almost eighteen years ago that the Islamic Republic should expect an uprising within the mentioned social classes. “Considering the changing demography of the country, they also need to be concerned about the revolution of rising expectations among Iran’s increasingly urban, literate, and young population” (p. 18).

Concerning the current issue, there is an acknowledgeable kind of replacement in social values in Iran. First of all, the working class, which was the desired social class for the Iranian left, partly shouted pro-Pahlavi slogans. Many of the

⁵⁵ Her death became a shocking and unforgettable moment of contemporary Iranian history due to the published amateur video from her last moments of life after she was dreadfully shot in the street near the University of Tehran on 20 June 2009 (“The Death of Neda: Behind the Photo That Captured an Iranian Woman’s Last Moments of Life” 2009).

⁵⁶ The Islamic Republic first claimed that Neda Agha Soltan is alive. They accused a murdered citizen of being an actor for the CIA, who threw the red color intentionally to herself. They claimed that the whole video is made up to damage the international image of the regime.

slogans are a harsh objection against the anti-American policy of the Islamic Republic in the region (“‘No Gaza or Lebanon, my life for Iran’: 52 people arrested in protests in Iran” 2017). Secondly, the worldwide of the lower class contains some conservative elements concerning their positive perception of the royal wealth and the royal inherited power. At the same time, there is still anti-monarchic bickering in the leftist campaign expressing the demand of bringing the Pahlavi royal family to the court of justice due to old anti-Shah claims about the richness of Pahlavis which the Iranian left has seen as the stolen money from the poor. The propaganda about the “astronomical estimate” of Pahlavi’s fortune was launched at the time of the invasion in 1941 and was part of the BBC policy to degrade Reza Shah by every means.

Stories about Reza Shah’s fantastic fortunes became accepted as gospel truth. The question of this fortune, its size and source, the tactics used to accumulate it, and finally, what should be done with it became not only the first crisis faced by the Crown Prince when he became Shah, but continued to haunt him for the rest of his political life. Documents from the British and American Embassies on the eve of the 1979 Islamic Revolution make it clear that the question of the Shah’s fortune, and the alleged corruption of his family, was, as in 1941, easily one of the most potent issues raised by the opposition. Even in exile, in his famous interview with David Frost, the Shah was repeatedly asked about the extent of his wealth, and he was more coy than angry about it. (Milani 2012, p. 69)

Nevertheless, the current lower class of Iran considers the Pahlavi monarchy neither as “comprador bourgeoisie” nor as a “puppet regime.” Burke (2003) indicates the difference between “the true moral equality of mankind” and the French “monstrous fiction” of equality “which, by inspiring false ideas and vain expectations into men destined to travel in the obscure walk of laborious life, serves only to aggravate and embitter that real inequality, which it never can remove” (p. 32). Burke was loyal to both natural rights and hereditary property, position, proportion, and privilege (Turner 2003). “All men have equal rights; but not to equal things” (Burke 2003, p. 50). As Turner reminds us, Edmund Burke’s idea of equality is likely not in accord with the twenty-century liberalism (p. x1), but his differentiation between equality, equity, the unjust, contribution, and different individual shares in the societal pyramid are all still issues worth to be thought. The increasingly deprived Iranians from the public goods have a lived experience of what Burke describes as a revolutionary rage against alleged “tyrannous aristocracy” which historically leads to “a new inequality was introduced of the most oppressive kind” instead of better principles of equality (p. 194).

The anti-Shah opposition cannot even explain why in the benevolent dictatorship of 1925–79 mostly the qualified and eligible figures were running the country and why after the victory of the Islamic-Marxist revolution mostly unqualified, ineligible, and even mobs have been appointed to the administrative positions. Ironically, the report of some scholars about the impacts of the Revolution of 1978–79 on the Iranian bureaucracy and civil service becomes a permanent pattern after the downfall of the Pahlavi monarchy. “Since the merit system was ignored and expertise was not appreciated, professional bureaucrats felt uneasy, insecure, and uncertain about their futures” (Farazmand 1987, p. 344). The demonstrators against the Islamic Republic do not accept the repeated propaganda of the anti-Shah opposition anymore; the equating ideological term *estebdād-e shaikh va Shah* (the despotism of clergy and the Shah) is against the initial observation of people from their own circumstances in comparison to the past. In other words, the simplistic term has lost its function to reduce the entire Pahlavi monarchy to despotism resulted in the same devaluation of both times. In other words, *estebdād-e shaikh va Shah* along with *būy-ie khūn* aim to demonize the Pahlavis and restore the anti-Shah sensations. In general, the classic Iranian opposition and its specific intellectualism still harbor “a visceral distaste for the Pahlavis” (Cooper 2018, para. 14). Paradoxically, the Iranian left is not a defender of the aristocracy, but they humiliate the Pahlavi’s origin by referring to its working-class without any precedence of nobility and ancestral privileges. On the contrary, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi refers to the origin of his royal family as the rise among the ordinary people (*Khāstgāh-e Mardomi*).

On the contrary, the oppressed people under the Islamic Republic have a dynamic common sense of what was Iran and what is it now. The reductionist approach to categorizing both Pahlavism and Khomeinism under the tyrannical regimes demonstrates the still-presence of the resentment against the Shah. The perception of current protestors from the Pahlavi monarchy is somehow similar to what Edmund Burke called “natural aristocracy” and in accordance to its Burkean coinage, has a real and straightforward connotation; the governance based on actual or presumptive qualifications by “cautious patriots” (Lock 2006, p. 311). As it is discussed in sections 3.3 and 4.1., the anti-Shah opposition ridicules the personal religious belief of the Shah, while they supported Khomeini in the most critical moment of Iranian history. They neglect that the Shah was a patriot and Khomeini was a transnational Islamist. Accordingly, the Pahlavi royal family is still part of the Iranian body politic, “though in exile.”

Burke denies that the present government is the legitimate representative of ‘France’. Mere locality does not constitute a body politic: ‘Nation is a moral essence, not a

geographical arrangement.’ The monarchy, the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, the magistracy, its landed and moveable property: these constitute the true body politic of France. They still exist, though in exile; and theirs remains the rightful title to ‘France.’ (Lock 2006, p. 536)

If we restricted the “nation” only within the geographical realm, then Iran has no nation and has no state after 1979 and can be considered more as a *corpse politic*, i.e., *dead body politic*, than body politic. It does not deny the history of resistance in front of Islamization during the last forty years. However, it reminds us of the failure to build a nation-state under the Islamic Republic. Iranians had an authoritative nation-state during the Shah, but they are being degraded into a totalitarian umma-state after the downfall of the monarchy. Popper asserts that “What is important is not so much *who* governs as *how* the rulers are influenced and controlled” (Marcuse and Popper 1985, p. 78). In pre-democratic Iran, it is still important *who* governs, for the identity of rulers has still a vital effect on *how* the country is being governed. In comparison to the failed Qajar state and totalitarian Khomeinism, the Pahlavis were benevolent despots with relative tolerance in opposing their political opponents. Nevertheless and after forty years, the Iranian left mostly tries to picture the Islamic Republic as a capitalist state, and simultaneously neglects the newly-emerged sectarian oligarchy peculiarly after the end of the Iran-Iraq war. “Keenly aware of the dispossession of the Shiite hierocracy by the Pahlavi regime, they sought to recover lost historical privileges” (Amir Arjomand 2012, p. 21). Conversely, the Iranian left partly represents the main challenge of the Islamic Republic more in its capitalism, instead of its Khomeinism. For example, Massarrat (2017) in an interview of a governmental news agency mentions the global problem of capitalism and demonizes Saudi Arabia as the wing of imperialism in the region with no mention of the danger of Khomeinist ideology for the Middle East. He insisted that “the Zionist lobby seeks to portrait Iran as a country that it is responsible for all global problems” (Massarrat 2013, para. 3).

The Possibility of the Restoration of Pahlavi Monarchy in Iran as a classic Form of Iranian Liberal Conservatism

As the first point, it is a factual point in Iranian politics that any monarchic restoration is only possible through the Pahlavi lineage. Otherwise, it would be impossible to revive monarchy in any circumstances, whether by a new Qajar heir or by a thoroughly new dynasty. As Homayoun (1984) indicates, the rejection of representing monarchic inheritance by the Pahlavi royal family means the annihilation of the monarchy forever. The issue of restoring the monarchy in Iran

is polemic due to its first and bold connotation as the absolute monarchy. First of all, it is essential to deliver a comprehensive analysis of the anti-monarchic revolution of 1979. The revolution was destructive, but it cannot be neglected because of its destructiveness in theory and reality. There is still some unanswered question about the Islamic Republic of Iran. For example, why the forty years of the Shiite theocracy is more stable than the whole period of the secular monarchy? Why Ayatollah Khomeini is the first Iranian ruler, who died in his own country since 1925 that Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar died in Italy.

Besides the historical differences between the two regimes, it seems that the controlled public participation in elections generally and in the presidential campaigns particularly, makes the Islamic Republic more stable and relatively immune from socio-political discontents within the middle class. In other words, the political representation under the Islamic Republic has been more successful in gaining the attention of the middle class than in the Shah's reign. It is vital to acknowledge the mentioned fact because the Islamic Republic is unprecedented in contemporary Iranian history related to its suppression, violence, mass executions, aggression, and corruption. Despite all these administrative defects and governmental depravities, the middle class seems to be more pessimistic about the Pahlavi monarchy than the current regime and the cause cannot be reduced to mere governmental propaganda. Both anger and accuracy of the Iranian youths can be considered as signs of both continuity and discontinuity in comparison to the past. In general, it is not determined whether Iranians will choose the restoration of the Pahlavi monarchy or not, but as Homayoun reminds us "the consensus on the necessity to build a liberal democracy in Iran has more vitality than restoring an updated form of monarchy" (Homayoun 2009a, pp. 81–86). Maybe the chosen position of the Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi (n.d.) is reasonable to remind the youths that their newly-appearance of zealous enthusiasm toward the idea of the constitutional monarchy should be represented into the values of liberal democracy and the right of Iranians to choose their own desired system in a free election.

4.3.3 The Reformers Conserve an Incurable System: A Story of a Successful Propaganda

The reformist rhetoric under the Islamic Republic started during the presidential campaign of Mohammad Khatami in 1997. Since that time, the accumulated results of more than two decades of reformers ended with domestic oppression and more regional tension. For example, the budget, power, and influence

of the revolutionary guard (IRGC) are more than doubled peculiarly under the “moderate” president Hasan Rouhani. Many times the iconic ideologues of reform claimed that “reform is dead” and immediately they renounced that “viva reform!” The contradiction in the reform rhetoric is an intentional approach to deform the public idea and the common sense of the Iranian society. Beclouding the division between reformers and hardliners was part of the mentioned domestic approach to deviate the actual criterion of people. In the vagueness, obscurity, and foggy atmosphere, the recognition of right and wrong becomes a rare proficiency. In all these years, “Most insider reformists in Iran have rejected the claim that they were deviating from the original aims of the revolution. They always argued that according to Imam Khomeini’s theology, they were the true revolutionists” (Mohammadighalehtaki 2012, p. 141). In other words, the so-called “reformers” and “moderates” stepped back from the revolutionary language and left it to the Supreme Leader and his appointees, but they made reformist praxis impotent by confining it on mere rhetoric atmosphere while the realpolitik has continued in accord with the revolutionary ideology. However, some scholars remind us that “it has not been uncommon for an influential mullah to speak one way and then to act in quite another way” (Bill 1982, p. 36). It is discussed in section 4.3.4 that the discourse of religious reform under IRI has a cooperative tie with political reformers and the latter is prone to polarize every event in favor of promoting themselves as the only solution which has never solved the Khomeinism. Even the debate under the Khomeinist ideology to decide whether to join Financial Action Task Force represents that “the reformists and other pro-government, moderate groups prefer the transparency embedded in FATF and believe that Iran would benefit by meeting FATF standards” (Hadian-Jazy 2018, para. 12). Reversely, Dershowitz and Ghasseminejad (2019) illustrate that the Shiite innovation to transform events against their primitive purpose, can also change the procedures of adherence to FATF and continue the ideological goals.

The claim of reformists had a wide resonance and respectively went up and down in their public declarations of their goal; from the supposed endeavor of making the constitutional *wilāyat-i faqih* to the empowerment of the supreme leader. The latter is the publicly declared aim of “hardliners,” and it shows that reformers return to the revolutionary language when they receive a negative signal from the supreme leader in order to keep their current political position which is in connection with their interests in the partnership of Khomeinists. As Sanasarian (2000) indicates, “Some argue that the phases of Iranian Revolution fit Crane Brinton’s model: specifically (1) the rule of the moderates, (2) the accession of the extremists and the “reign of terror and virtue,” and (3) Thermidor and the return to normalcy” (p. 18). However, the Islamic Republic does not meet the third

plane of becoming a normal state. That is why Homayoun (2009b) rejected the hypothesis about the Islamic Revolution that the Shah chose the wrong time for the political opening (p. 20). For, many of those who blamed him “not to reform in the correct time and wanted to reform in the wrong time” are still defending the reform of the Islamic Republic which vanishes the boundary between the right time and the wrong time due to its ideological and nepotistic stubbornness in front of any reform (Amir Arjomand 2012). Therefore, the problem was mainly the Shah, the Pahlavi monarchy, pro-Western modernization, and there was no genuine concern about reform, human rights, or democracy.

4.3.4 Religious Intellectualism: The Failed Reform and the Successful Conservation

Friedrich Nietzsche did not intend to neglect the actuality of religious influences when he illustrates that “the same cruelty that we found at the heart of every culture also lies at the heart of every powerful religion, and in the nature of power in general, which is always evil” (Nietzsche 2006, p. 167). However, the main position of religious intellectualism in post-revolutionary Iran was to reduce the occurrence of theocratic tyranny to a solely theoretical arena and then to propose political reform within a theocracy. Consequently, they falsify both politics and religion. Political Islam is a theoretical issue, but when it is embodied in the state, then the solution would be only political. It has never been evident whether they are theorists or politicians. In fact, their achievements prove that they are none of them. Promoting theoretical debates about an aggressive hierocracy and inviting to vote in its electoral campaign are two examples of the reverse role of Iranian religious intellectualism. In the end, they could not reform the religion, and they preserve the theocracy.

It should be pointed out that the forty years of Islamic tyranny in general and Shiite despotism in particular, made already many Iranians critical to any religious rhetoric or religious will to the power. It does not mean that Iranians are now mainly atheists or they do not have religious beliefs anymore. However, it means that many Iranians have become skeptical and pessimistic about any combination of religion and politics due to the negative experience after 1979. As Taheri (2019) professes in bitter and satirical rhetoric, “Khomeinism has produced two losers: Iran as a nation and Shi’ism as a faith” (para. 29). As a concentration on real-life, it has to be said that the lived experience of the religious interference into politics resulted in an original vision of the mass about the destructive function of any religious democracy which is merely a populist theocracy. In

these circumstances, all the new interpretations and speculative narrations uttered from religious intellectuals about Islam, democracy, secularism, modernity, and the Shiite identity in Iran are like a too late panacea for an already happened disaster which could not be cured till now and becomes worse in comparison to the past. On the other hand, there should be mentioned that the theoretical defects are not only on the side of religious intellectuals mostly formed by previous revolutionaries of 1979. The secular elites of Pahlavi were also part of the mentioned cultural delay due to the public unawareness of the harm of political Islam to the Iranian body politic. For example, the review of the life of Shojaeddin Shafa (1918–2010) can shed some light on the issue. Shafa was the Shah's speechwriter and one of the originators of the 2500 year celebration of the Persian Empire and the head of the Pahlavi national library. Therefore, Shafa was a bureaucrat, intellectual, and of course one of the ideologues of the Pahlavi nationalism (Milani 2012). However, Pahlavi nationalism had not an accurate vision of political Islam as a social phenomenon. It aimed to link the celebrated past to the present through magnifying Persian culture and antiquity without considering discontinuities in the history of Iran. In other words, the Pahlavi nationalism suffered from the lack of dynamic vision due to its ideological adherence to the official ends. After the Islamic Revolution, Shafa became a radical critic of Islam and the origins of 1979 as an actualized disaster that rooted in the Islamic will to the power and related occurrences in the early history of Islam. It seems that the newly-strategy of Shafa was also too late panacea for a completely affected body politic by Khomeinism; former bureaucrats who served Pahlavi conservatism in Iran, suddenly became a religious reformist in exile. In one of his books, Shafa ridicules Khomeini by responding to his mocking of the Pahlavi hat, as part of the Westernized dress code for men during Reza Shah. Khomeini expressed in his *kashf al-asrār* that the Pahlavi hat is a product of *Ajāneb* (i.e., the Western foreigners). Shafa reacts to this phrase of *kashf al-asrār* by illustrating that the Shiite turban is also a product of *Ajāneb* as an indication to the early Muslim foreigners who occupied the Sassanid Empire.⁵⁷ Shafa described the constitution of the Islamic Republic as an embodiment of juristic humiliation of humanity in Islam. "Approving such a constitution by Iranians at the end of the 20th century

⁵⁷ Understanding the roots of anti-Arab sentiments in Iranian elites, Iranian sociologist Mashayekhi (1953–2011) indicates that major invasions by Greeks (334–330 BC), Arabs (seventh century), Turks (eleventh century), and Mongols (thirteenth century) contributed to the formation of a xenophobic ideas and conspiracy theories which influence the collective memory; a mass psychological defense mechanism that assisted Iranians to bring themselves to a more satisfactory state through undermining the collective identity of "others" (Saleh and Worrall 2015).

reminds us about Faust who sold his soul to the devil” (Shafa n.d.-a, p. 19). With an alleged reference to Mohammad Baqer Majlesi (1627–1669),⁵⁸ Shafa emphasizes that the turban is the Arab crown and is not an Iranian dress and that the very turban is a sign of political Islam (IANSARI1000 2017).

Surprisingly, all of the religious intellectuals in Iran are still in emotional dependence on the character of Ayatollah Khomeini and some of them still have defended his political heritage or at least his charismatic assertiveness. They are still fascinated by his decisive authority to put an end to the Pahlavi monarchy, in order to build a then supposed “religious democracy,” which has changed the usual pattern of Iranian history. The last case of such an utterance belongs to Abdolkarim Soroush, who claimed that Iran had never such a popular and wise leader like Khomeini since Achaemenids (550 BC), for he was well-educated in the Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic mysticism. Soroush made it clear that between Khomeini and Shah, he would choose the first definitely because Khomeini was “a unique example of the ruler” and “he has the moral virtue of courageousness.” The further explanations made his utterance more disputable by insisting on his claim as a reaction against many severe objections in the social networks and the Iranian media. Soroush reacted as he does not convince yet that Khomeini’s reign was worse than the Shah’s period. The previous claim has an additional part of praising Khomeini due to his powerful political leadership and of humiliating the Shah due to his cowardliness. “He just knew to leave the county as an only solution in the time of political crises and crucial affairs.” Soroush expressed (“Tajlil-e Abdolkarim Soroush az Ayatollah Khomeini: Vākonesh-ha va Enteqād-ha/ Praising Khomeini by Soroush: The Reactions and the Critiques” 2019). Firstly, there is a distinction between being an influential leader, and being a tyrannical leader and Khomeini was both of them. Commemorating such a character is a sign of the necessity to be skeptical of their former claims about the 1979 revolution as “the fight against tyranny” and their current promises to adhere to democratic values. Secondly, there is the obscurity of recognizing the necessary knowledge which is related to governance. Put another way, the entire project of the religious intellectuals was at least removing Sharia laws from the body politic. Reversely to the mentioned purpose, praising Khomeini (because of his knowledge of the Islamic jurisprudence, as an Ayatollah,) and humiliating the Shah (for his studies in a school, i.e., Le Rosey, in Switzerland) can be considered as a sign of continuous attachment to the sublimity of theocracy. The mentioned attachment is discussed in section 3.4 on the Western political aesthetic approach and can also be applied

⁵⁸ Mohammad Baqer Majlesi was a powerful Twelver Shia clergy under the Safavid reign.

to the domestic attitudes of anti-Shah revolutionaries. The confrontation between the “uneducated” and earthly Shah with the wise and heavenly Khomeini has still occupied the mentalities of many anti-monarchic revolutionaries. Similarly, Ayatollah Khomeini receives praise from other religious intellectuals, like Malekian (2013) advising the Iranians to “live in a Khomeinian way”⁵⁹ and Shabestari to refer to Khomeini as “the honorable leader of the Revolution.”

There is a point to understand the expected role of a religious intellectualism under a system that combines religion and politics in the form of a Shiite hierocracy; the reflections and theories of those intellectuals are going to a relative political reform because in every theocracy it is recognizable that a religious reform becomes identical to political reform. The very characteristic of the Islamic Republic Islamizes politics and politicizes Islam. An Islamic reform under the current system is not only a parallel plan to political reform, but also *it is, itself and in itself*, the political reform. The mentioned point cannot be considered as a politicizing Islam. Instead, it is cautious about being aware of an already politicized Islam in the form of the Islamic Republic. Therefore, there is no Islamic reform in Iran as far as the Sharia law is the main judicial content of the country and systematically being applied to the citizens. Relatedly, any expectation from Sharia to become compatible with modern values is considered as a reformist demand which remains under the general Islamic revivalism. In this regard, the ideas of a dissident Shiite clergy which supposedly demonstrates “the extent to which fiqh is reconcilable with other fields of study and contexts” is not the issue of an assertive Islamic reformation (Pick 2000, p. 28). The socio-political departure from Sharia does not need a religious ground and is already legitimized, in itself, under natural law and human rights. As a precondition of any religious reformation, Islamic theology is needed to be revised. Therefore, the nullification of Islamic jurisprudence would be the logical consequence of a reformed divine image.

Particularly, it is a key fact to know that all the so-called religious intellectuals are half progressive theoretically and full regressive practically; they claimed a kind of controlled secularism which should respect all religious belief in theory, and they supported all the political manipulations target the Iranian public idea. The elections in all totalitarian systems, like the Islamic Republic, are just an instrumental part of the undemocratic structure to pretend legitimacy through controlled and dysfunctional electoral competitions. Ironically, they invite people

⁵⁹ Some years later Malekian revised his former belief and allegedly declared that he is not a follower of Khomeini’s thoughts, but he still likes him and has a strong intimate emotion to Khomeini’s character.

every time to vote for so-called “reformists” exactly based on all of their new reflections to reform Islam. In a reversed way, the religious reformation of these former revolutionary Islamists and current Islamic reformists result in the long-term endurance of a tyrannical theocracy, less sustainability of the civil society, and above all, without any reforms in the cultural and educational policy of the current regime. In theory, their terminologies are partly vague and abstract. The using of subjective and objective to explain the Islamic faith or the limitation of politics with religion is one of their theoretical obscurities (Vahdat 2000). Regarding the abstract analyses, there is sometimes no clear distinction between the democratic and the secular in their philosophical explanation of secularism, and it seems that their political discourse is still being pursued under various theories of “religious democracy” (Ayatollahi 2015). In this regard, the project of religious intellectualism after 1979 is similar to what Nietzsche describes as “the way bad conscience is woven together with the concept of God” (Nietzsche 2006, p. 62).

Moreover, the majority of religious intellectuals can be identified as part of the Iranian moralist intellectualism in recent decades which reduced politics to culture and proposes cultural solutions to the complexity of the Shiite militant theocracy in Iran (Ayatollahi 500). Criticizing the Iranian moralist intellectualism after 1979 does not deny that “that obedience to authority over conscience is not inevitable” (Velasquez et al. 1988, para. 4). In other words, As Velasquez et al. explain, it is undoubtful to acknowledge the vitality of moral education in order to enhance the human conscience and the “ethical quality” of our future choices in real life. However, it criticized the diffusion for replacing moral teaching for a specific political solution. The Iranian moralist intellectualism atomizes the society and converts the problem of a Shiite hierocracy in public to the necessity of applying moral virtues in private. In comparison to all theories of secularism presented by religious intellectuals, it seems that the Iranian leftist intellectualism has delivered more concrete theories in this regard, like the speculative endeavor of Nikfar (2003). He proposes a theory of Iranian secularism in adherence to the normative values of modernity and with reference to the actualized or possible domestic experience in the past. Conversely, the late Nikfar is turned to Iranian moralist intellectualism. The alternative theory of Nikfar to confront the Shiite political theology named “the tradition of asceticism” invested mostly on Shiite quietism and apolitical self-discipline in the form of piety. He denies the possibility of the reformation in Islam, but he simultaneously suggests a theory of religious reform ethics, Iranian chivalrous tradition, and pious apoliticism (Ayatollahi 2008). It can be considered as a deviation from the political philosophy

to the intellectual moralism. Moreover, the ascetic theory of Nikfar neglects the fragility of Shiite quietism as a temporal tactic in the history of Islam.

Naraghi (2016), associate professor of philosophy and religion in Moravian College, explains that religious intellectualism could not define and clarify its reformist discourse with comprehensive methodologies to determine its relation with what he called “the Rule of Recognition,” principal Islamic sources, and the modern knowledge. Naraghi believes that Shiite intellectualism is ambivalent about reforming the fundamental characteristics of Islam as represented in its theology and principles of faith. He concludes that most religious intellectuals choose a conservative attitude toward the fundamentality of Islamic reform by minimizing the need for reforming Islamic theology and divine characteristics. More importantly, Naraghi lightens that rare endeavors to reform principal Islamic believes pursue excessive non-realistic interpretations which hold that religious claims are not about realities that transcend human language, concepts, and social forms. This non-realistic approach will lead to the emergence of a new *madhhab*, or a new religion depends on the extent of reformation. In an ontological distance from the religious intellectuals stands Abdolkarimi as one of the former disciples of Ali Shariati. Abdolkarimi can be considered as a consistent Fardid and without his resentment toward Western thought. He is fascinated by Heidegger’s philosophy and is among spiritualist thinkers with adherence to the separation of Western ontology and Abrahamic faith. Abdolkarimi (2012) criticizes the philosophical foundations of secularism, but he is aware of assessing the prevalent confusion that the Shiite hierocracy in Iran is a spiritual burden against Western nihilism in Heideggerian terms. Similarly, Abdolkarimi (2007) criticizes religious intellectualism in Iran due to its politicization from the beginning. He is clear to find the thoughts of Shariati and his followers with all of their theoretical transformations as an unsuccessful effort confined by the temporality of politics and deprived to reach the ontological standpoint.

As an example, Mojtabeh Shabestari (1936-) is a prominent Iranian theologian who even took an unprecedented step as a symbol of his autonomy to take off the religious clothing in order to announce his complete separation from the Shiite establishment and official seminary. He published many books to give a new and secular interpretation of Islam, the very character of its prophet Muhammad and the early Islamic history. Shabestari has an innovative insight as a Shiite scholar about the religious faith and its tie with the principal Islamic sources, i.e., the Quran and the *hadith*. He is a unique representative of an existential approach toward Islamic history from a Shiite perspective. In this regard, he has “an epistemological detour” from his predecessors like Ali Shariati and Morteza Motahhari (Vahdat 2000, p. 36). Shabestari (2002) asserted on the relative entity

of interpretation and the historicity, that is to say, the relativeness of the historical authenticity, of all sacred texts; “understanding the experience of forefathers is only possible to be realized through questions of contemporaries which is its turn findings of contemporary experiences. For, human life in itself is a historical entity” (pp. 29, 30). Shabestari applies the relativity of understanding to the religious experiences and respectively to the perception of Islam. He gave many speeches and interviews with in-depth criticism on the extreme demands from religion as a sacred package that can solve all the human problems and suggest the best solution for all the global issues. Therefore, he has a detached personage from his former tie with the Islamic seminary, and he has a distinguished reputation in the academic and intellectual atmosphere, and above all, he is distinguished for his longstanding critical reflections to assess the religious ideology behind the Revolution of 1979.

The religious legitimacy was a Shiite clerical reaction against modern values which was emphasized on the political legitimacy and the clergies considered it as a threat to their interests, because of their partnership with political despotism. However, our collective experience after the Islamic Revolution proved that all the achievements came out of political legitimacy and all the failures appeared due to the dominant gestalt of religious legitimacy. Nowadays, it becomes clear more than ever that religious legitimacy is the only illusion that suddenly emerged through the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini and currently is going to vanish from the socio-political scene of Iran. (Mojtahed Shabestari 2017b, paras. 4–6)

In a rare opinion between the religious intellectuals, Shabestari (2015) believes that criticism of the religious authority was more assertive and more dynamic during the Pahlavi monarchy and it does not have such an expected progression due to the emergence of a theocracy in Iran after 1979. More importantly, Shabestari (2014) insisted that ISIS is also a reformer in Islam in compliance with its own interpretation and the honest approach from Muslim scholars cannot only deny the connection between Islamic terrorism and Islam. He continued that the desired Islamic reform is possible only through a humanistic approach in order “to achieve an interpretive formulation of an Islamic orientation that is much more compatible with the exigencies and challenges (as well as addressing some of the discontents) of the enormous forces of the modern world” (Vahdat 2000, p. 33).

With all these considerations, Shabestari can be considered as such a symbol of the free spirit in the speculative world and between Iranian thinkers. Nevertheless, he always supported “reformists” in all discriminative electoral campaigns of the Islamic Republic, as if all of his accuracies vanish when it comes to

the real political scene. Shabestari (2017a) claimed that Hasan Rouhani is the only choice to build “the rational state” during his second presidential campaign. He expressed a similar argument in the last Islamic assembly election in which many unknown persons or even hardliners being promoted by reformers to Iranians (Mojtahed Shabestari 2016). “Western concepts such as ‘moderate,’ ‘liberal,’ and ‘extremist’ cannot be exactly and precisely transferred to the Iranian social scene since there are subtle differences in interpretation and meaning” (Bill 1982, p. 35). Shabestari in all of his decisive ethical invitation to vote for “reformers” emphasizes the realness or political polarization between death and life, civilization and savagery, happiness and misery, and eventually between reformers and hardliners. The decisiveness is mere during the electoral period and Shabestari, like other religious intellectuals and political claimers for reform, becomes politically silent between two respectively elections and the continuation of the *bad sovereignty*.

The point about the Islamic Republic is that all the political plans to reform the paradoxical constitution, Islamic laws, and repressive function of its whole governmental body have failed due to its sustainable hardcore which has formed an ideological infrastructure that dominates all the socio-political bodies and occupied the public. The ideological occupation of the Iranian public sphere represents itself every time in an updated form of expression to affect individuals, social discussions, and politics. Therefore, the realpolitik under the Islamic Republic has lost all of its main notions. After 1979, the realpolitik is not practical, not real and its ideological resistance makes all reformative endeavors as mere some purposeful efforts with purposeless results. In a more accurate articulation, all such political acts within the system, whether bureaucratic or electoral, or judicial, have reversed outcomes which can be considered as unaimed collaborations with the Islamic Republic resulted in the conservation of the totalitarian structure. In contrary to well-designed propaganda against the opponents and opposition groups, the unreformability of the Islamic Republic finds its grounds in the experimental politics and the historical facts in more than two decades.

To compare Shafa with Shabestari as two figures related to religious reformation and political conservatism, it is worth pointing out that the radical criticism of Islam with the anti-clerical sentiments is an understandable reaction to an unprecedented newly-established clerical power in Iran. Probably, the future of Iran will face the same public anti-clerical sensations being followed by a similar policy against seminaries and the main Shiite establishment in Qom. Let us not forget that the moderate, secular policy of the Shah was not the main cause of the Islamic Revolution, and supposed radical secularism in the future through an

Iranian laic policy will not prevent the possibility of emerging the next generation of Shiite politics. In this matter, Shafa (Shafa n.d.-b) himself asserts that the current struggle with “oppressive Islam” is a necessary preparation for giving birth to the “real Islam” as a peaceful religion. As Hanegraaff (2009) reminds us, “Modern biblical criticism was a crucial factor in the decline of the authority of Scripture; and more generally, the rise of historical criticism undermined the authority of traditional accounts of the history of the Church” (p. 6). In comparison, the radical anti-Islamic criticism and the pro-Islamic criticism both aim to reform Islam and make it civilized. Shafaism lacks Islamic knowledge in detail, but it is clear to put an end to the Shiite hierarchy. Shabestarism is equipped with Islamic knowledge, but it is ambivalent to departure itself from the Islamic Republic. In other words, the external approach criticizes religion mainly through its external relations of entanglement, i.e., the context of social conflicts, opposing motivations, antagonist interests, and the arrangement of historical actors. On the other side, the internal approach criticizes Islam mainly by the entanglements internal to religion: transformations, a holistic attitude to its discourse, reinterpretations, inner connections, acceptance, and inclusiveness as well as rejection and exclusion. Interestingly, both mutual entanglements exist in Shafaism and Shabestarism: 1) *Intrareligious dimension* (or internal factors to religion) which means the consideration of the very religious tradition. 2) *Extrareligious dimension* which means the relationship between religious and non-religious factors, like political economy, global history, the influence of other traditions, and the role of social institutions. (The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” 2019). The difference appears between emphatical and radical criticism on one side, and between traditional Islamic knowledge and the absence of it on the other side. Shafaism is radical and founds its critical approach to the research of orientalist. Shabestarism is emphatical and based on seminarist knowledge with an arbitrary adaptation of Western philosophy. It seems the ideological motivation of both sides, deprives them of accuracy and a dynamic critical project to rethink the traditional Islamic knowledge in the light of modern Islamic studies. The immediacy to deal with Khomeinism left no place for contemplative approach.

Relevantly, there is a theory about the reform of Islam that focuses on the rapid changes of the recent centuries comparing it to the 17th and 18th centuries. The conclusion is to inform us that it is too late to found a democratic body politic based on a reformed Islam. Therefore, there is no solution in the realpolitik except to simply launch the process of separation between the Islamic establishment and the political structure. Shafaism is more like the mentioned theory, despite its own emphasized purpose to reform Islam. Shabestarism is more like an intellectual reform that always postpones the ultimate separation to an unknown ideal time.

In realpolitik, secularism cannot be postponed after the probable actualization of religious reform. However, the stable and sustained separation between Islam and the Islamic will to the power can be realized only through countless efforts within generations. Since individuals have the right to live in free and prosperous circumstances, the political decisiveness to end the tyrannical Khomeinism has the priority, in the short-term, over the intellectual reform. It is vital to insist on the fact that the Shiite clerical discourse will not deepen its self-reformation as long as the Islamic Republic bribes it with numerous benefits due to its partnership in an established theocracy. In 2018, “the budget exposed the large amounts of taxpayers’ cash allocated to religious institutions and other entities affiliated to factions within the Islamic regime” (N. Bozorgmehr 2018, para. 2). That can explain why Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi more resembles his father than figures of the anti-Islamic reformist discourse which is pursued by former elites of his overthrown Royal Family. The theoretical innovation under religious intellectualism is still bound to the Islamic Republic. Therefore, Reza Pahlavi reasonably prefers to stand on the side of the traditional, classical, and practical secularist approach of his father to declare a clear and straightforward demand of separation politics with religion. That is why he was among the rare opposition figures who continuously supported the dissident Shiite clergy Ayatollah Hossein Kazemeini Boroujerdi (1958-)⁶⁰ who simply but vitally demands the separation of religion and government. Reza Pahlavi seeks an *actual and real exit* from Khomeinism and does not want to fall into the intellectual debates about religion or the polemic discussion on early Islamic history. In this sense, the Crown Prince keeps his distance from both religious intellectualism under the “moderate” Khomeinism and the anti-Islamic reform of Pahlavi elites. Reza Pahlavi does not want to choose either Shafaism or Shabestarism.

As Ādamīyat reminds us, all the failed political reforms since the fourteenth century played their role and left their influence on social thoughts. Similarly, Ādamīyat (1981) indicates, that although the thought of religious modernity could not endure, its importance is undeniable. Accordingly, the nature of historical transformation does not necessarily imply an advancement. However, the experiences can lighten a speculative realm that has not been noticed before. Religious intellectualism in Iran was the inevitable consequence of the Islamic Revolution. The Pahlavi monarchy as a modernist state had its own traditional relations with the Shiite clerical establishment. Nor monarchy and neither its opposition had no

⁶⁰ Hossein Kazemeini Boroujerdi is a Twelver Shii Muslim cleric who advocates secularism in favor to maintain the dignity of Islam. He has been arrested and imprisoned several times by the Islamic Republic for his objections against the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamanei.

impression of Shiite capacities to be revived as a severe threat to the political order. When Khomeini came to the political scene, the monarchy remained in confusion, and the anti-Shah opposition took advantage of its emergence in order to overturn the Pahlavis. Meanwhile, the “traditional” Shiite clergies made a vital mistake to leave their quietist attitude and join Khomeini’s campaign. The clerical consensus or inactiveness in that time shaped the future of Shiism thoroughly different from the past. The probability of monarchical restoration is discussed in section 4.3.2. However, any restoration is a mutated form of its previous political gestalt. Accordingly, the previous Pahlavi monarchy and the likely future one cannot be the same, whether in the case of its former autocratic power or its former appeasement of Shiism. A tolerant, lawful, and comprehensive secular policy is an intrinsic part of constructing a liberal democracy in Iran.

Most of the religious intellectuals who have been arisen after the Islamic Revolution denied all the critiques toward Islam by attributing “essentialist” to the critics as a supposed negative description in the nominalist modern contemporary time. They are getting used to indicate that all the critics of Islam, i.e., the Islamic history, Islamic texts, the character of Muhammad, and the Islamic mentality, are the followers of the old-fashioned Platonic ideal theory who think they can capture the essence of Islam. The same rhetoric in the form of an argument goes to the debate on the Islamic Republic. In other words, they claim that nothing is the subject of being unreformable. First of all, not every claim about a supposed essence belongs to the Platonic philosophy. Not every indication of essence is an essentializing attitude. Religion occurs within human history, but religion is not a shapeless historical incident that can solely be identified by its external ties to society, geopolitical circumstances, and the behavior of opposing actors. In other words, religion cannot only be explained in terms of its social eventuality and its engagement in the state of affairs. Rather, it possesses an intrinsicness (*Eigensinn*) as the finding of its tradition and history, its rituals, language, and intercommunal interactions. The acknowledgment of religious intrinsicness is inevitable to explain why religion can appear as a self-centered factor in history (The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” 2019). The same approach can be applied to the Islamic Republic. Moreover, there is no denial certainty about the future of the IRI. However, any fundamental change would be occurred out the ideological loyalty and the structural tyranny after 1979. However, this contingency is only a historical-philosophical possibility despite the will of Khomeinists and, therefore, cannot be the basis of a theory or a political plan. Secondly, the very claim that nothing is impossible to be reformed is an essential standpoint insisting that everything is reformable. Thirdly, there are some theoretical principles to study a specific historical period, such as a governmental pattern of behavior like similar

totalitarian reaction to uprising. Simply, when the Islamic law rules over four decades on a country, it is justifiable enough to conclude that the system which carries this kind of Sharia judicial procedures and supports it, is an Islamic structure or is a theocracy. The last time that an Iranian citizen was victimized by Sharia law was not a decade ago but on 17 January 2018.

Iranian authorities have amputated the hand of a man convicted of theft. The amputation, which was conducted by guillotine, took place yesterday in the central prison in Mashhad city ... The Iranian authorities have consistently defended amputation as the best way to deter theft, expressing regret that it cannot be practiced in public and on a widespread basis without international condemnation. In a shocking statement before the UN Human Rights Council in October 2010, Mohammad Javad Larijani, the head of Iran's Human Rights Council, denied that such punishments amount to torture, claiming they are "culturally and religiously justified" ... Between 2007 and 2017, the Iranian authorities issued at least 215 amputation sentences and carried out 125 amputations, including at least six amputations in public. ("Iran" 2018, paras. 1–10)

Does this kind of judicial system corrigible? Since "autumn of 1982, the juridical Islam (*Eslam-e fi qahati*) had become victorious and eliminated all secular or those who did not follow the juridical version of Islam" (Rajaei 2007, p. 149). Does a certain judiciary capable of being reformed, which is founded on such a *fatwa* issued by Ayatollah Khomeini with "revolutionary rage and rancor" led to execute over 4000 political prisoners? The mentioned political cleansing by the government took only one summer to plan, arrange, and deliver.

The *fatwa* established commissions (which were commonly known as "death commissions") in each of the provinces. The commissions were instructed not to "hesitate or show any doubt or concern with details" because "to hesitate in the judicial process of revolutionary Islam is to ignore the pure and holy blood of the martyrs." Thousands of prisoners were secretly executed during the summer of 1988. Their bodies were dumped in mass graves, which in some places were covered over with tarmac. It took months before the families were notified of the deaths of their loved ones. (*An International People's Tribunal: JUDGMENT on 5th February 2013/ A Case Concerning the Gross Violations of Human Rights and Commission of Crimes Against Humanity by the Islamic Republic of Iran* 2013, p. 3)

Is not it Islamic totalitarianism, when Sharia law and Shiite political theology dominate the public and become the decision-maker for the life and death of human beings? As a governmental custom of the Islamic Republic to deride the human virtues, let us not forget that one of the top members of the mentioned central "death commission" in Tehran, was Mostafa Pourmohammadi (1960–)

who became the minister of justice (2013–2017)⁶¹ in the first term of “moderate” president Hasan Rouhani. The ineffectual “bill of rights” was being unveiled under his ministry (“Rouhani Unveils Toothless Charter on Citizen’s Rights Without Path to Implementation” 2016). However, the official claim that the Islamic Republic will not adhere to the “Western” human rights had declared after the Islamic Revolution by Said Rajai Khorasani “stated that post-revolutionary Iran was not bound to comply with human rights ... he proclaimed that the Islamic Republic would have no qualms about violating international human rights if religion demanded it” (Mayer 1996, p. 270). In his speech, as Mayer narrates, Rajai Khorasani claimed that universal human rights is a secular understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition and is against the values of Muslims and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In fact, Rajai Khorasani invited the West to come back to its supposed Abrahamic authenticity and purify itself from Greek philosophy and the idea of natural rights. In this regard, Mehraeen illustrates that the Western metaphorical thinking on human rights is fundamentally different from the Islamic metaphors in which Rajae Khorasani and other Islamists perceive human rights and principal concepts like obligation and responsibility. Mehraeen (2016) articulates the Islamic eschatological worldview remains no place in human mentalities to consider earthly rights in front of heavenly laws. The divine pattern of master and slaves, in the form of Allah and his servants, negates any autonomous and self-efficient rights intrinsically. Assessing the language as an ontology, Dustdar (1993) explains that the longstanding historical religiosity as a form of being deprived of critical thinking has shaped the mentality of Shiite clergies, politicians, and specifically intellectuals. He traces the roots of what he called “religious culture” since post-ancient Iran.

There is also a vital question about human beings who live under the Islamic laws; how many people should be humiliated, amputated, stoned, or executed till the supposed “nominalism” of religious intellectuals discover the way of reforming the Islamic Republic? Moreover, the mentioned quoted sentence from Mohammad Javad Larijani⁶² is also the tacit Western attitude of some politicians and partly the public idea of Europe in particular, which has been discussed in section 3.4 within the assessment of the Western perspective toward Pahlavi

⁶¹ Similarly, the current minister of justice (20 August 2017-) of the same president is Seyyed Alireza Avayi (1956-) who was part of the judiciary in that summer and was involved in the executions of Iranian political prisoners in 1988 in Dezful (a city in the south of Iran which belongs to the Khuzestan province).

⁶² Mohammad Javad Larijani (1951-) is a politician, logician, and former diplomat. He is currently a top adviser to the current Supreme Leader in foreign affairs and secretary of the High Council for Human rights, Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

monarchy using the concept of political aestheticism. It also has an essential tie with the cultural conflicts of the West with Islam and the immigration crisis. There is no wonder for the discussed type of a European to hear that a woman being stoned in the Middle East. They think most of the lands in the region are “Islamic countries,” and, normally, Sharia takes place in such lands. There is confusion between reality and values in the mentioned view. There is also confusion between almost Muslim society and a defined land as an “Islamic” one. Cumulatively, the multi-culturalism and cultural relativity in the current Western liberalism resulted in justifying Islamism, and it becomes now a global problem. Put simply, the solution is supposedly assertive and revised liberalism in Contemporary Western philosophy. Many of the prejudices about the people from the Middle East, which caused some avoidable cultural tensions in the West derived from their own views on the relationship between Islam and Muslims. Not every person from the Middle East is a Muslim, and not every Muslim obliged himself/herself to obey Islamic law or the Islamic way of life. It is not an easy process to conclude these sentences partly due to the failed process of reforming Islam and the rise of new Islamic military movements.

4.3.5 Iranian Culture, the Islamic Republic, and the West: A Persistent Misknowledge

Another issue about the corrigibility of the Islamic Republic is an intentional emphasis on the cultural progression as an alternative to the necessary political changes. It is another side of the coin which Mohammad Javad Larijani and passive Western liberalism play with it. It does not want to deny that the current Iranian culture is thoroughly different from the time of 1979 and that many Iranians are against applying violent Islamic law. It exactly points on the opposite side to focus on the modern tendencies in Iranian society in order to use it in favor of the idea that the Islamic Republic is still corrigible. The latter position is a fallacy to gather actual historical facts as a minor premise of a wrong syllogism. The major premise is that “all the cultures which are changed, can change the political system” and the minor premise is that “the Iranian culture is changed.” Therefore, the wrong conclusion came out of a wrong major premise and a true irrelevant minor one. The mentioned fallacy is aimed to infer a political change from a cultural one; the Iranian culture is changed, so is the Iranian regime. The hidden assumption is that the regime was the sole driving force in bringing about the sociocultural changes that are witnessed in Iran in the last few decades. However, the Iranian society, with its evident transformation and young

social fabric, would significantly change regardless of its ruling forces, like all the other cultures and societies. Exclusively about Iranians, the orientation of the cultural change is still under the undeniable influence and persistent presence of the Revolution 1979.

Obviously and due to the negative findings of extreme religious demands in politics, the culture makes its own reaction and formed its own resistance against the maximum pressure as a governmental revolutionary plan to change the Iranian way of life thoroughly in favor of the Islamic ideology or as Khomeini preferred to articulate, in order to “produce a new kind of human being.”⁶³ After 1979, the revolutionary government expected that all Iranian individuals aligned themselves with the Islamic virtues explained by Ayatollah Khomeini. “A more challenging endeavor facing the ruling clerics was how to purify Iranian culture from its non-Islamic traits and make the citizenry’s lives compatible with “Islamic” teachings” (Boroujerdi 2001, pp. 17, 18). Due to the continued resistance to the clerical rules which were actualized mainly by both the lower and upper middle class, the private life of many young Iranians lies far away from the governmental desired extreme religiosity. For, they see that only dishonesty and immorality came out of the revolutionary Islamic virtues. After the victory of 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini promised Iranians to raise their spiritual needs and to bring them into the place of humanity (“Enqelab-e 57, Seri-e Jadid, Qesmat-e Yek: Madreseh-ie E’dām/ The Documentary of the Revolution 1979, the new series: The School of execution” 2016, 01:32:38–01:32:55). As Homayoun (2009b) indicates, the Shiite clerics took the opportunity to seize power almost two centuries late and what he called the “cultural middle class” is the main force to develop the socio-political structure of Iran despite the clerical preferences (p. 18). Nikounazar (2016) explains the roots of the clerical obsessiveness against the body, the femininity and its expressions like mode, fashion, and dressing code of ordinary Iranian women in terms of the anti-Western nativism and the ideological struggle against what Shi-ite clergies named as “cultural conspiracies to overthrow the Islamic Republic.” Similarly, Karimi (2020) explains the relationship between sexuality and urban design. She illustrates that the feminine body cannot make herself comfortable with city design that is meant to dominate or alienate her. Karimi criticizes the patriarchal mentality of urban design generally and clerical-patriarchal plan to form cities as a terrifying space for Iranian women specifically. She illustrates that the women can only be oppressed observers of the city and there is a rare

⁶³ Khomeini stressed in many of his speeches and writings that Islam is the industry of producing integral human beings and that the Islamic Revolution aims to propose a new definition of humanity and produce new human beings.

possibility for them to participate as self-sufficient actors. Karimi (2021) reminds us, based on a specific training course in performance studies, that the code of bodily conduct expresses a gap between conscious minds and restricted bodies. An illuminated mind can act as a dominated body. It means that even after the downfall of the Islamic Republic, it takes years for women in Iran to find themselves and their bodies in public as they wish and will.

Iranian cultural transformation is relevant to the Islamic Republic, and it is irrelevant. The dual relation depends on what to be meant by relating the Iranian cultural changes to the Islamic Republic. What happened in the culture of Iran during forty years needs a separate inquiry to give a multidimensional and well expressive analysis. Briefly, not all the changes can be considered positive, like mutual distrust between people and the high rate of aggression, violence against women, and excessive depression according to the official reports (Tavaana n.d.; “Khoshūnat-e Khānegi alaiheh Zanān/ Domestic violence against Women” n.d.; “Vezārat-e Behdāsh-t-e Iran: Afsordegi dar miyan-e Zanāan rū beh Afzāyesh ast/ The Ministry of health in Iran: The depression is going to be increased between women” 2017). Related to the newly-emerged political culture, Mina (2016) illustrates the consequences of Islamic pressure on private life along with producing the desired Islamic nihilism which can result in a senseless generation toward public affairs. Mina confronted the new incident, as *the populist idea of pleasure*, to the former version during 1979–89, as *the populist idea of death*. Mina asserts that the new apolitical hedonism is an antithesis of the promotion of martyrdom during the Iran-Iraq war. According to Mina, the disillusionment about Islamic utopia leads to a nihilistic rejection of any collective idealistic purposes. Subsequently, the Islamic Republic is capable of directing it to the support of the regime in the time of need.

Put simply, the positive or specifically modern and secular changes in the Iranian culture are not the effort of the Islamic Republic. Instead, it is the effort of an oppressed society to survive. On the contrary, all the negative cultural changes are intrinsically the effort of the Islamic Republic. In this regard, the Iranian society before 1979 was healthier than today. The secular or anti-Islamic⁶⁴ way of life between Iranian youths was the opposite of the purposeful governmental plan. The negative cultural affections are the result of purposeful misgoverning in an unfair, inadequate, and unjust way of ruling on Iran. In 1970, Ayatollah Khomeini within teaching his theory of *wilāyat-i faqih* in Najaf claimed that the

⁶⁴ Related to the dominant Islamic way of life, the difference between non-Islamic and anti-Islamic vanishes. For, Islam does not acknowledge “others” in the same place as “Muslims” i.e. adherents to Islam. The non-Islamic is not in accord with Islam or against it, but Islam is generally against the non-Islamic.

sensitiveness of Islam to government, the political, and the economic relations of society is aimed to create “conditions conducive to the production of morally upright and virtuous human beings” (Khomeini n.d.-a, p. 20). The irony is that divine intervention in everyday life has led to the failed bureaucratic divinity.

Related to increasing secular tendencies between Iranians, it is worth mentioning that even using Islamic terms are became controversial between dissidents. While the Iranian society is being affected extensively by consequences of a religious revolution, e.g., there is a discussion in Iranian debates on the daily political affairs not to call the protestors who died during demonstrations against the Shiite despotism as “martyr.” For, the mentioned word has a robust Shiite connotation in favor of the political Shiism. The “martyr” is considered as an Islamic term with a peculiar Shiite implication which is against the secular demands of those who lost their lives to put an end to the Islamic Republic as the embodiment of the political capacity of Shia Islam. “The figure of the martyr loomed large in Shī‘ī hagiography as the supreme embodiment of faith” (Denis MacEoin 1983, p. 225). The observation of the secular revolutionary anti-thesis of 1979 prefers now to not use the sacred enthusiasm of martyrdom (*shahāda*), because of its capability to resurrect a new Shiite political gestalt after the current one.

Returning to Western cultural relativism as the basis of European diplomatic policy with the Islamic Republic, it misrepresents the positive facts about Iranian culture and denies the resistance of Iranians against Islamic discriminatory laws. As the Crown Prince, Reza Pahlavi (2019a) stated in an interview “the Iranians respect the West, not because of its geographical location, but for its liberal values and accordingly they expect the Western support in their struggle for liberty.” Many decades ago, Foroughi in one of his letters to the British statesman James MacDonald (1866–1937)⁶⁵ criticized the remained old Eurocentric mentality of some British diplomats which showed itself during the negotiation between Iran and Britain through some unjust and unjustifiable prejudices. Foroughi (2011) expressed his regret that their diplomatic conduct is as if the Eastern people deserve not the same behavior that Britain had to express with its own European partners. He emphasized that Iranians proved in the recent decades that they are willing and capable to make Iran civilized, safe, and progressed, if they received assistance from others or if at least others would not restrict them to build a prosperous nation-state (p. 157). In a similar and bitter example, the Shah

⁶⁵ James Ramsay MacDonald was a British statesman who served twice as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, during 1924–1935. MacDonald was the first Labour Party politician to become Prime Minister. He headed a National Government from 1931 to 1935. He was later expelled from the party.

mentioned the double-standard of the West toward the Pahlavi monarchy and the newly-established Islamic Republic.

It is always the tendency to compare the country in my time to the most perfect democracies of the world. I don't mind that. But now what we hear is 'Well! Let's try to understand these people' or that 'Islam is something special', when what they are doing is absolutely contrary to Islam. Now, everybody is trying to say 'Well! Let's try to understand these people' [i.e.] these people who are killing ... others, or the people they don't like ... but in my case, it is compared to the most perfect government of the world. In the case of those kind of people usually there is a tendency especially in the most liberal circles of the world; 'Oh! Let's try to understand them. Let's establish a dialogue.' This is something that I don't understand. (Lancast 2010a)

All the mentioned sayings from Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, Mohammad Ali Foroughi, and the Shah have a meaningful connection with the discussed issue in section 3.4 on the Western political aesthetics toward the two antagonist eras of Iran. However, it is not only a misleading representation of considerable demands from Iranians to annihilate the Islamic pressure on their life, whether public or private, but also neglecting the negative cultural affections by pursuing the appeasement policy. Therefore, part of the West always gives political grants to a government which makes its own people miserable, and more importantly in international relations, destabilizes the region by dual diplomacy to support rulers or opponents depends on which side can serve better the ideological interest of the Islamic Republic. Therefore, they support Bashar al-Assad as the ruler in Syria and Hezbollah or Houthis as the opposition in Lebanon and Yemen. The politics of appeasement leads to wear the Islamic veil by Federica Mogherini and by the entire feminist members of the Swedish cabinet who were marching in front of the clergy as the president of a Shiite hierocracy and to cover the nude statues from Roman antiquity in Rome's Capitoline Museums of Italy when the same Mullah came to visit it ("Sweden defends officials wearing headscarves in Iran" 2017; Povoledo 2016).

All the mentioned deeds are justified under the title of respecting Iranian culture and laws. The politics of appeasement is a Western acceptance of Islamizing Iran and neglecting the Iranian uprising from January 1979 till now, which partly led to the protest of girls in Tehran when they removed the *hijab* and put the Islamic veil on a stick (Lusher 2018). They are lately known as *Dokhtarān-e Kheyābān-e Enqelāb* (Girls of Enghelab Street). The first iconic woman who started this struggle, Vida Movahhed (1986-), shed her headscarf in public. By inventing a "new female civil-disobedience campaign" (Wright 2018) against the Islamic misogyny, she builds a bridge between two generations who had been

disconnected from each other; the mass protest of women on the eve of Islamizing Iran on the 8 March 1979 and also the protest of Homa Darabi (1940–1994) who immolated himself in Tehran as an objection against the compulsory *hijab*. In contrary to post-colonial analysis, the chador during uprisings of 1978–79 was not merely “utilized as a placard for political action against the Shah,” and those women have carried an Islamic ideology against the West. Conversely, *Dokhtarān-e Khiyābān-e Enqelāb* “position themselves within a lineage of female political participation” but not under the discourse of contesting the civilization of “others” and not to carry a similar ideology of Islamist women in 1979. These girls find the adherence to ideas of freedom, liberty, and civil rights as their second nature without any motives to struggle against the unjust global order of capitalism. In other words, the normative inheritance of the Enlightenment is the fundamental axioms of *Dokhtarān-e Khiyābān-e Enqelāb*. They do not want to be pro-Western probably, but they want the same rights of the Western citizens in Iran as part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There is no insistence to represent them as *Dokhtarān-e Khiyābān-e ShahReza* (the former name of the same street before 1979 as a commemoration to Reza Shah). However, these girls wanted to emancipate themselves from below as a synthesis of the emancipation of women in 1936 and the Islamization of women in 1979. The continuation which *Dokhtarān-e Khiyābān-e Enqelāb* have established with the modernization of Pahlavi is not a presumption far from the reality and the changes in Iranian views about their past. Using the words of Empress Farah Pahlavi, *Dokhtarān-e Khiyābān-e Enqelāb* are now aware of the importance of autocratic “tremendous change in women rights” during Pahlavis and want to pursue it in a democratic way (thekinolibrary 2017b).

The fear of conflict with the Islamic Republic leads Europe to appease an aggressive power,⁶⁶ which now threatens the continent in the official utterances of its president Hassan Rouhani (“Iran’s Rouhani says sanctions may lead to drugs, refugee, bomb ‘deluge’” 2018). The socio-political challenge in the West to define a dynamic policy toward Islam and the refugee crisis in Europe can also be perceived through the relationship between Western political conservatism and the Islamic identity which derives, in its turn, from the Islamic mentality. Angela Merkel (2015) articulated that “Islam is belonged to Germany” after the

⁶⁶ In this regard, as Dubowitz (2019) articulates, the withdrawal from JCPOA, the new wave of sanctions, and the maximum pressure campaign of the Trump Administration are not only an American issue but outcomes of continuous international security concerns. The sanctions work ‘unevenly’, but it aims to stop the expansionist policy of Shiite clergies by means of IRGC. “Tehran is slashing transfer payments to its surrogates like Hezbollah, Hamas, Shi’ite militias, and the Assad regime” (para. 3).

terrorist attack in Paris. The German chancellor wanted to say that reformed and peaceful Islam belongs to Europe. The issue comes up in this standpoint to ask whether the current Islam is the desired one by Western criterion or it needs more reform and then who is responsible and acknowledgeable to do such changes in Islam. The European refugee crisis can also be articulated in this regard. Some scholars find the roots of crisis partly in the fact that “the European principle of culture and the territorial differentiation of “foreign” and “Self” are rooted in the deepest layers of everyday life” (Şen 2008, p. 34). A survey illustrates that two-thirds of Turkish immigrants in Germany describe themselves as religious and 7 percent as strongly religious. Moreover, as Şen explains the role of age, “there is also a connection between length of residence and religiosity: The longer the subjects have lived in Germany, the more religious they feel ... being in a non-Muslim environment does not appear to weaken bonds to the religious heritage” (pp. 39, 40). In young generations of Turks in Germany, there is a move toward a modern-liberal orientation. At the same time, Şen illustrates that there is also a dangerous tendency to fundamentalism among the youth. Educational level and job status influence self-perception and how to perceive others. Black (2011) considers the popular definition of Islamism unsatisfactory, while revivalist tendencies (going back to sources or reviving the Golden Age) are as old as Islam and the universalist concept of *umma* had precedence since the ninth century. Therefore, he seeks the roots of Islamism in the Muslim mentality as a concept, not as an indication to human beings.

While it is true that a separation between religion and government took place, and that many Muslim groups practised disengagement from politics, this was never formally acknowledged. Muslims have throughout history seen political power as a necessary part of their religious project. (Black 2011, p. 306)

As Scruton (2017) analyzed the refugee crisis, Europe accepted a “mass of people who are not loyal to the territory of where they live” by appealing to various transnational identities. Scruton believes that the question of loyalty urges Europe to renew its legacy of social trust, which is possible to realize only through nation-state and without lapsing into the religious or ethnic homogeneity. Scruton indicates that “we want to renew our communities as communities of law-abiding and accountable citizens able to make sacrifices for the common good, who will work together to establish common institutions and a shared way of life” (Bibliothek des Konservatismus 2017). Relevantly, Schwarz (2019) explains that the “refugee crisis” in Germany is a complex which is formed by various factors and cannot be reduced to one or another element; its complexity derived, e.g., from

the tie between the formulation of policy based on the political correctness and the role of moral assessment in the evolution of safety culture. However, the issue of Islam, Muslims, and Islamism is a sensitive debate in the West, due to its relevance with human rights and the unconditional rights of citizens or inhabitants under the Western democracies.

As some social scientists have claimed, the public discourse has enforced a dichotomous and simplistic divide: a liberal and democratic West that is either Christian or secular, opposed to a unified entity of aggressive Muslims who advocate religious totalitarianism. Others have argued that Islam is represented in the West as an “Otherness” so radically different that it is defined as a “historical enemy” equivalent to the communist threat decades earlier. ... Nevertheless, with some 20 million Muslims living in Europe today there appear to be only two options presented: the Islamization of Europe or the Europeanization of Islam, with the inclusion of Muslims through the notion of citizenship. (Abaza 2007, pp. 4, 5)

The solution cannot be a new resurrection of the Crusades and reincarnation of the Holy War between Islam and Christianity (Noth 1966). As Hanegraaff indicates, intolerant ideologies draw historical parallels between facts and perceptions. Hanegraaff (2009) concludes that the anti-Islamic sentiments which are currently gaining prominence can easily propose a similar formulated nativist ideology to the early 1940 s by appealing to its *dualistic simplification* by differentiating human beings with *us* vs. *others*; “die Muslime sind unser Unglück” (p. 2). Doubtlessly, the problem of Islamism is not the same as the problem of immigration, and equating the both are reasonably considered as Western xenophobia. However, there is an overlap between them. On the other side, as Abaza (2007) reminds us, modernizing Islam is not an “imperialist civilizing mission,” but it is still the main concern about “the corruption of Islam by its rulers throughout history” (p. 13). Abaza utters that the exit from the mixed crisis is not to empower the Christian fundamentalism against Islamic fundamentalism or to depict the “West” as an ideal model of secularism and democracy and to picture Muslim lands as inherent pre-Modern part of the world. However, the antagonist values between the Islamic mentality and the Western liberalism leads to cultural conflicts, severe prejudices, and the rise of the European far-right politics which had a negative impression in the very Europe, due to the past century. Ahmari diagnoses the problem in the rapid departure of Western conservatism from the alleged “ineffective” liberal order. The conservative-Christian perspective has lost its trust in liberalism and even equates it to communism both as a totalitarian child of the Enlightenment. They believe that liberal diversity and toleration have ended in ideological conformism. However, as Ahmari (2017a) emphasizes, “in

the real-world experience of the 20th century, the Church, tradition, and religious minorities fared far better under liberal-democratic regimes than they did under illiberal alternatives” (para. 49). Ahmari asserts that illiberalism should remain as discontent that is internal to liberal democracies.

It should be pointed out that an open society needs to guarantee its openness, i.e., its liberal values. Radical Shiism is a pragmatic Islamic attitude to use a liberal atmosphere to influence the public to its advantage. Relatedly, some of the institutions in Europe are clear to express their goals in developing a Shiite identity, while there is no emphasis or clearance about their desired adherence of values in Europe (“Visionen und Ziele” n.d.). A German Parliamentary report unveils that the Islamic Centre of Hamburg, along with the Islamic Republic’s embassy, is one of the most remarkable organizations affiliated to Iran (“Finanzierung der „Islamischen Gemeinschaft der schiitischen Gemeinden in Deutschland e. V.“ durch den Bund im Rahmen der Extremismusprävention: Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Fraktion BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN” 2018). The head of this center is a member of the conservative Assembly of Experts that consists of eight clerics who are approved by the Supreme Leader for eight-year terms. Mousavi (2018) reminds us that the European appeasement toward IRI has led to undermining the annual occurrence of the anti-Semite demonstration *Al-Quds* in Berlin. These incidents are a sign of the systematic influence of the Islamic Republic in Europe due to varied grounds include the European politics of appeasement which is assessed in section 3.4 in terms of the philosophical aesthetics and political philosophy of Edmund Burke.

The Shiite ideological anti-Americanism of the Islamic Republic which is woven with the anti-Western and anti-Semite Islamism, “continues to generate hostility even without serious policy conflicts between the United States and the elite’s own government” (Rubinstein and Smith 1988, pp. 35–45). Europe neglects the mentioned irrational and hateful anti-Americanism, which promotes by Tehran and its allies. In general, the relative moderate European policy toward the Islamic Republic can be conceived based on European multilateralism. The consequences of the current European policy toward the Islamic Republic are not quite determined, though a comprehensive observation shows no optimism about the future of the mentioned relationship, the excessive Shiite activism, and the desired integration of immigrants in accord with the European values. The fear of self-expression is also recognizable in Western culture when the issue comes to the objection against Islamism, which often being labeled as Islamophobia. The mentioned fear makes individual relations more elusive, as it makes international relations more frustrating. Moreover, Izadi diagnoses defects of Islamic studies in

the West by indicating the fear of academic criticism of Islam due to the prevailing left-liberal approach toward Islamism and the fact that every critique can be uttered at the expense of being accused as Islamophobe. Izadi (2018) identifies the fragility of the Islamic studies in the dominant conspiracy theories against Western Orientalists, the intervention of enthusiastic Islamic sensations into studies, and the financial support of Muslim countries for related departments. He concludes that Islamic studies should remain devoted to the principle of Humanities and adhered to academic freedom. Izadi mentions a Persian interview with Kramer⁶⁷ who addresses some of the mentioned challenges of the Islamic studies and criticizes the financial dependency of some departments which makes them apologists of Islam instead of being an academician. Nevertheless, the fear to defend the Western culture within the West is against all the programs of importing lessons about critical thinking in the educational system.

There is a subtle depoliticization of contemporary culture, where everyone has a right to express a point of view, but where peer pressure or the norms and practices of the media (including sound bites and image management) surreptitiously channel what is said and how it is received. There is fear of saying the unpopular thing, and fear of being misunderstood, muddled sometimes with confused notions of respect — and these notions find their way into education as well. Ironically, even the reasonable principle of social inclusion has its own pathology in its tendency toward a kind of cleansing. And this, as these remarks imply, takes multiple forms. (Standish 2005, p. 382)

In contrary to the ineffective Pahlavi propaganda, it is essential to point out the effective propaganda of the Islamic Republic, its efficiency to manipulate the public opinion and to produce fictional hopes periodically which ended in another national disappointment. A coalition of politicians and intellectuals, both define themselves by their religious identity, formed a reform discourse that has a reverse function to nullify the idea of reform and to keep the “still” unreformed system. The Islamic Republic is also one of the most powerful states in the region to make its own international allies, institutions, and figures specifically in the West and despite its anti-Western ideology. The Islamic Republic understands a conservative truth about human beings as Burke (2003) indicates in a satirical tone that making a government needs no more than settling the seat of power and teaching obedience (p. 208). However, the other side of the human reality is being

⁶⁷ Martin Seth Kramer (1954-) is an American-Israeli scholar of the Middle East at Shalem College in Jerusalem. His specialties are Islamic studies and Arab politics.

neglected; “we are subjective creatures. But we set the objective rules and procedures. In other words, we ourselves determine that which then determines us” (Emerson 2012, p. 9). Therefore, if the preservation of totalitarian policy is the result of open electoral debates, then the very open electoral debates themselves will also be totalitarian.

Numerous research institutions affiliate themselves directly or indirectly with the Islamic Republic. Some of academic exchanges and interactions between Western institutions and dependent one to the Islamic Republic results mostly in an opposite way; it represents the wrong image of clericalized Iranian academies⁶⁸ to Westerners and represents the wrong image of the West to Iranian researchers (Iran Academia 2018). Cumulatively, these domestic and international institutions have two main purposes; presenting the Islamic Republic as a possibility to democracy by promoting reformists and presenting Shia Islam in accord with the regional policy of Tehran. They claim that reformists, despite their least political influence, are eager to “welcome Iran’s economic and political integration with the global community.” Similarly, despite “lack of a decisive role in government,” they may resist the IRGC and the conservative establishment to select the desired supreme leader after Ayatollah Khamenei (Nader et al. 2017). These institutions publish many analyses in the field of Middle Eastern studies, Islamic studies, and particularly the understanding of Shia Islam and the actual circumstances of Shiism and Shiite community in the region. Indeed, a prior prejudice about research is not adjusted with the academic manner. However, a posteriori assessment of the mentioned literature is in adherence to the academic bipartisanship and the principle of charity. Accordingly, the main message of the mentioned research is to represent Saudi Arabia and Wahhābism as the only model of Islamic radicalism in front of the Shiite hierocracy in Iran. The precedence of political-sectarian conflict with Saudi Arabia comes back to the reign of Ayatollah Khomeini who “long sought to depict the House of Saud—representatives of the institution of monarchy, which he saw as incompatible

⁶⁸ Ghasemi (n.d.-b) explains that the inherited Shiite archetypes to mysticize all compartments of human knowledge in favor of chaotic imagination of the occultation is woven with the anti-Western sentiments. The combination results in the disordering and disruptive Islamization of Humanities in Iran after 1979. Similarly, Mohaddesi (2011) proposes a reasonable solution for the everlasting tendency of the Islamic Republic to Islamize Humanities. As a sociologist, he suggests officials who responsible for the governmental program of Islamization to provide a convincing justification of a given Islamic social theory concerning human being, society, history and the transcendental. He expects that IRI leaves sociological theory and all related departments on their own to pursue Western methodology. Mohaddesi differentiates both objective and concrete issues of the sociological theory in front of subjective and abstract realm of knowledge in the social theory.

with Islam—as corrupt, improper, and unfit to guard the holy sites of Mecca and Medina” (Alaoui 2018, para. 39). The partisan analysis of affiliated institutions to the Islamic Republic purposely picture it as the counterexample of Wahhābism through promoting “moderates” and “reformists” within the system. Nevertheless, the first prerequisite for any reform in Shiism is a theoretical departure from the ideology of the Islamic Republic and the political inheritance of Khomeini.

Conclusion

They have found their punishment in their success. Laws overturned; tribunals subverted; industry without vigour; commerce expiring; the revenue unpaid, yet the people impoverished; a church pillaged, and a state not relieved; civil and military anarchy made the constitution of the kingdom; everything human and divine sacrificed to the idol of public credit, and national bankruptcy the consequence; and, to crown all, the paper securities of new, precarious, tottering power, the discredited paper securities of impoverished fraud and beggared rapine, held out as a currency for the support of an empire, in lieu of the two great recognised species that represent the lasting, conventional credit of mankind, which disappeared and hid themselves in the earth from whence they came, when the principle of property, whose creatures and representatives they are, was systematically subverted.

(Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. New York: Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2003. pp 33, 34)

The quoted phrase of the *Reflections* is a meaningful description of what happened from the Iranian revolution of 1979 until today. The difference between an anti-religious French revolution in the 18th century and an Iranian religious one in the 20th century makes no difference in the ideal image of mankind, equality, freedom, benevolence, prosperity, and the characteristics of any body politic. The longstanding and future influence of the French revolution in a global scheme is also different from the regional and international influence of the Iranian revolution in 1979. In general, liberty or the demand of being liberated is the given honor to any revolution, regardless of its real content and goals. The liberal questions of “liberating from what and liberating to what?” are still unanswered and neglected by many revolutionaries all around the world. Although, the revolution in itself cannot be denied because it is a revolution, but can be strictly criticized for its directions, goals, and deeds.

Foroughi, in a rare occasion against his usual political manner, confronted Reza Shah's decision clearly in 1934 and told the Shah that his will to close a newly-founded leftist magazine called *Donyā* (The World), belonged to one of the first Iranian leftist thinkers Taqi Arani, will not meet the national interest (M. Foroughi 1982). He meant precisely that the oppression of journals and journalists is against the comprehensive vision in the domestic politics and also is against the public good to not only educate institutionally from above but also raise dynamically from the very social conflicts as far as it goes under the civil society and with adherence to the social contract. The prime minister meant to not stop the inevitable process of self-expression in Iranian public life through examining contemporary ideas and knowing about the antagonist views even from a second-hand and almost not accurate narration of a native thinker. In the mentioned regard, Taqi Arani had no anti-Western attitude in his political activism reflected in *Donyā* magazine.

Concerning the mere democratic values, let us not forget that the fear of self-expression was a continuous defect in the Iranian political culture from the rise of the Pahlavi monarchy to its collapse. In general, an effective democracy needs some essential foundations in society, and democratic self-expression is one of them. As Standish (2005) illustrates, "Only in a democracy does everyone have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion" (p. 371). A deliberate democracy is a collective form or political participation based on self-conscious citizens who have a reasonable assumption on the vitality of their own individual rights and the importance of the existence of the state.

A democracy requires that we do not simply hand our problems over to experts, for there is at least one respect in which any ordinary individual has unique expertise — that is, in "the knowledge of where his or her 'shoe pinches.'" Hence, "without the participation of the public in the formation of such policy, it could not reflect the common needs and interests of the society because those needs and interests were known only to the public. (Standish 2005, p. 371)

One of the conclusions in adherence to the central issue of the thesis is to assess the relationship between the fear of power and the fear of divinity. The term "divinity" means both religious inner ruler and outer religious establishment. The prosperous interaction between these two spheres of fear is to transform the fear of God into religious self-consciousness and to make a transition from the fear of power to political self-consciousness. What happened in the Pahlavi era was quite the opposite; the fear of God turned into the impetuosity of political Islam, and

the fear of government vanished rapidly¹ and shaped into a massive rage. Returning to the iconic figures, Foroughi had negligence about the vitality of religious self-consciousness or of being self-conscious about the pride and shames of one's own religion. The last prime minister of Reza Shah and the first prime minister of the last Shah of Iran took undeniable and precious efforts, e.g., to pass the governmental bills which aimed to change the Iranian educational and judicial system in favor of secular values, despite being faced with severe clerical objections. Furthermore, Foroughi had a domestic diplomatic specialty to soften the despotic taste of Pahlavi autocracy during the critical time of both Shahs. However, Foroughi's passive or frightened political conservatism to the religious domain made him pessimistic toward any religious reform like what Ahmad Kasravi was trying to realize in that period. In this regard, even the honorable Foroughi, himself, was unaware of the importance and of the fundamentality of his own bureaucratic reforms which should be founded on suitable social ground.²

The mentioned vague passiveness as a "secular" important part of the religious tradition in general and the inactiveness or quietist characteristic in Shiism constituted a similar tie with the passiveness of political conservatism during Pahlavi. It means that the passive idea of "national security" and "political stability" was not only prominent in the premiership of Foroughi, but it was the main political conservative discourse during Pahlavi as an autocratic secular monarchy ruled over an almost traditional society. Put another way; the Pahlavi conservatism preferred to invest only in the religious piety and apolitical aspects of traditional Shiism. Sarcastically, all of the alleged spiritual and peaceful, and pious elements of Shiism proved their potential in 1979.

¹ The sense of being free from "fear" and being able to express oneself in supposed freedom after the victory of the Islamic Revolution was a popular feeling and it specifically recognizable in the face and in the words of the woman in an interview (Ina Histoire 1979), who believed that Khomeini will not be a dictator and she cries due to her emotion of being fearless after 1979.

² The bureaucratic body of the Pahlavi monarchy was in this matter rather traditional and optimistic on the role of religion, which they always differentiated from the Shiite clerical establishment, and of course from the religious radicalism. In general, Foroughi was critical against religious bigotries, and religious superstitions. In particular, Foroughi as a statesman put his main effort to deal with the Shiite clerical establishment in order to prevent any probable clerical confrontation with the Pahlavi reform plan. He had a prudent, mild reformist approach toward religion, and he even used a religious analogy to prove the consistency between religion and constitutionalism. In this sense, Foroughi was definitely against the nullification of Shiism that appears from many utterances of Kasravi. His ideas on politics and religion will be discussed in a separate work as a dedicated monograph to him and Kasravi together.

The only continuous and guaranteed political loyalty which can bring long-standing public good is based on democracy and transparent ties between society and government in order to form a prosperous nation-state, and that was absent in the Pahlavi structure, as it did not exist in its anti-monarchic opposition. According to almost all memoirs from politicians and ministers during the Pahlavi era, it is asserted that they could not articulate their own real critical opinions in front of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah. The lack of courage to self-express themselves in the presence of the ruler led to the lack of loyalty when the ruler and consequently, the whole ruling structure found themselves in a crisis of 1979. The political loyalty in that time was based on the temporal and fragile interests of those who were involved in the Pahlavi bureaucracy, without finding their own acknowledged dignity in the former body politic and mutually be hesitant of defending the dignity of the body politic in the time of danger. As Burke (2003) reminds us, in the absence of the “idea of a liberal descent” which is capable of inspiring people with “a sense of habitual native dignity” to prevent insolence and disgrace, then freedom equates with the misrule and profusion (p. 30). In this regard, the Pahlavi monarchy carried out all dilemmas in Iranian history to be a conservative and simultaneously a revolutionary succession, which eventually could not preserve rational freedom with “our rights and privileges” (p. 30).

Pahlavi was more rational than his opponents, but to be survived in the long-term as a progressive and pro-Western monarchy in the xenophobic Middle East it had no choice except to find a peaceful exit from its own irrational domestic politics, i.e. to alienate the public and to be alienated from the public. It was the expression of Pahlavi’s obligation, but the possibility of the obligation is still skeptical historically. In this sense, rational freedom is a collective perception of rights and responsibilities. Criticizing the Shah as the main pretext of the downfall of the benevolent autocratic system means that he had the adequate ability to rationalize his monarchy and to remove the irrationality from his opposition. Moreover, there is a stubborn contradiction in picturing Iran as a pluralistic democratic society in the post-Reza Shah era and representing the government as the only barrier to let all the given democratic capacities be actualized. The dilemma is not only limited to a certain period of 1941–1953 but also can express in the current time under the Islamic Republic. However, the difference lies in the constitutional role of the Shah and the absolutist position of the current supreme leader. The issue is to rethink a social capacity that could not be embodied in the political structure as it was expected. All the unprecedented democratic possibilities in the first decade of the Shah ended up in a serious turmoil in which Mosaddeq was part of its cause.

The case is the same about the upper and lower Iranian middle class who were not directly involved in the ruling system, but the autocratic system was their only representative at that time and was the only defender of their modern way of life, and the middle class benefited from its secular domestic policy and its peaceful regional policy. However, humans must be aware of or must become aware of their own benefits based on the feeling that they are part of the system through dynamic socio-political participation. Ultimately, the supposed religious self-consciousness could be a finding of the political self-consciousness and consequently could form a combination of religious and political awakening in a constructive way. Hypothetically, the mentioned mixture could prepare and actualize a peaceful transition from the Pahlavi benevolent dictatorship toward liberal democracy. The importance of political participation, or giving the sense of being participated in politics, is a simultaneous program with the importance of official education “in which learning to question, to criticize, and to think for oneself is fundamental” (Standish 2005, p. 372). Expectedly, democratization should direct the society into the autonomous and self-sufficient body politic, which is capable of keeping its democratic and liberal values. Put simply, the democratic society grows and develops under liberal values as its second nature. Therefore, democratization is a mutual task between a given civil society and a self-correctible political structure.

There is also an inevitable narrowness in every research perspective, which reduces the vision to the specific aspects of every historical affair or speculative subject. Regarding the current thesis, concentrating only on a particular characteristic of the political structure in the Pahlavi era, i.e. Iranian conservatism, and on a distinctive social dimension, i.e. religious reformation, confines the scope of the inquiry and disregards the possibilities of any other socio-political causes in the mentioned historical period led to the anti-monarchic revolution of 1979. The international relationships, the Cold War period and its geopolitical consequences on Iran, the role of political economy and the relation of “the economic base of the society” with the institutional superstructure in Marxist theories of revolution in connection with the different theories of development, all are almost disregarded when research focuses mainly on the relationship between the conservative discourse in politics and the alternative religious movement (Abrahamian 1979a, p. 382). Both are considered as elements of a conciliated plan, and collaborative efforts based on shared socio-political concerns could supposedly confront the undeniable power of political culture which was against the Pahlavi.

At the end of all the speculative considerations on the historical possibilities and limitations in the Pahlavi era, the loss of mutual understanding between the Iranian society and the Pahlavi state was the deepest gap that led the entire

body politic into a slow but increasing process of disintegration and disruption. The narrow circle of Qajar-Pahlavi constructed nobility class or the royal-established aristocracy could not support the modernizing project theoretically in a comprehensive tie with the middle class. There is a controversial discussion on the possibility of speaking about any “aristocrat” social class in Iranian history. The “continuous”, “independent”, lawful, kingmaker, and “long-term” European aristocracy is incomparable with the “transient”, dependent, “arbitrary”, and short-term Iranian nobility that was made by the king as a creation from power instead of being a constituent part of the power (H. Katouzian 2003, p. 24). Regardless of all the doubts on the existence of such a societal force in the past, the Iranian nobles preferred to keep their fragile acknowledged privileges and their higher social status in a wrong conservative way, i.e., the politics based on fear, weakness, ignorance, and distrust. The right conservative way of the mentioned given social class was to criticize the defects of the Pahlavi state in an honest way instead of praising and justifying all the governmental deeds with the deep inner disbelief of their own position as admirers and apologists. Ultimately, mistrust between different social classes and between the whole people and the government made it impossible to enlighten Iranians about their remarkable social welfare and their “unprecedented degree of prosperity and social mobility” (Ahmari 2018, p. 26). That is why Foroughi (2011) expresses in 1919, with the sense of sorrow, that Iran has no state and has no public idea.³ The writing of this radical assessment belonged to his residency in Paris during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, which led to a diplomatic failure of Persia in the late Qajar period. Similarly, the saying of Foroughi can be reformulated in the Pahlavi dynasty as follows: “Under Pahlavi, Iran has a state, but has still no public idea.” The reformulated sentence refers to the lack of dynamic connection and mutual understanding between the Pahlavi state and Iranian society. Put another way; it cannot be neglected that “the modernization program did not, however, entail reform in the structure of political power, nor did it attempt to introduce a culture of political pluralism and democracy” (Mirsepassi-Ashtiani 1994, p. 58).

Rashidian (1978) illustrates that since ancient times, the monarchic discourse tried to present a similarity and connectivity between the virtues of the King and the virtues of the society. In this sense, the monarchic virtues pictures as the source of social virtues. “We are in the [longstanding] presence of a kind of

³ The same expression is articulated by Mirza Hossein Sepahsalar (1828–1881), the reformist prime minister of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar. Sepahsalar asserts the necessity to reform the public idea in order to facilitate reforms in the body politic (Ādamiyat 2006).

personification of social thoughts or, reversely, socialization of personal virtues of monarchs” (pp. 191–193). That is why Rashidian decodes all the monarchic appearances since the pre-Islamic era as an ideological surface for the substance of Iranian politics as state or, in his desired accuracy, as despotism (pp. 207, 208). *Shahriyārī* (Iranian kingship) is the continuation of the divinity of earth. In many ancient texts, the duties of the king are considered as his privilege, and his principal obligation to protect his people becomes part of his authority or even his right. Therefore, the rights of people transform to their duty, and the duty of the king transforms to his right (pp. 219–221). Rashidian concludes that Iranian literature is full of the idea of being defenseless in front of the monarchy, i.e., state. He ended to assert that the historical failure of emergency of the Iranian bourgeoisie is rooted in the totality of Iranian state bureaucracy which intrinsically does not have a monarchic characteristic. It prevented the rise of an independent bourgeoisie. Cumulatively, the omnipotent Iranian state bureaucracy originated social loneliness, mistrust, misunderstanding, and the sense of being unsecured (p. 226). Nevertheless, the transition to democracy is an impossible occurrence when the sense of being insecure prevails in politics. There are at least two examples related to the thesis. As a historical example, it is necessary to mention the experience of Foroughi during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Foroughi was a member of the Persian delegation at that time. According to his memoirs, they were supposed to negotiate, and they received an order from the Qajar court to stop the negotiation. Foroughi felt angry, anxious, and insecure.

We [as the Persian delegation] do not know what should do. I heard that the Great Consular of Britain had visited the Shah these days and maybe the telegraph is a result of their meeting. God help us! I do not know what is going on. I am wondering why Tehran told us not to engage in the negotiating process and has left it in obscurity. Why they do not explain the situation, so we also being informed about it. The result [of the short telegraph] is to waste time. In the next few days, it is more likely that the issue of Iran being articulated in the Peace Conference, and we do not know what is really our mission. (M. A. Foroughi 2015, p. 39)

These are the words of one of the most prominent politicians in the history of Iran; full of hesitation, anxiety, uncertainty, and disappointment. However, domestic instability and insecurity were reproduced in the Pahlavi monarchy. As another example, it should be pointed out what happened to the Shah between 16 and 19 August 1953. The Shah decided to leave Iran on 16 August, due to the intensified conflict between His Majesty and the Prime Minister Mosaddeq; once the Shah realized that “his orders were not being followed, he left the country to prevent further bloodshed and further damage” (Milani 2012, p. 146). During

his short residency of two days out of the homeland, no one in the embassies of Iraq and Italy acknowledged him as the Shah of Iran. A few days earlier he was the Shah, and now no consulars in Baghdad or Rome welcome him as the Shah. According to the memoirs of Princess Ashraf Pahlavi (1982), the Shah faced difficulties even to find a taxi in his early hours of arrival in Rome. An ordinary Iranian, named Hossein Sadeq, recognized him and served him as a driver (p. 46). Mozaffar A'lam (1882–1973), the consular of Iran in Baghdad, and Qolamali Khajehnoori (1896–1961), the consular of Iran in Rome, both refused to serve the Shah. Khajehnoori's behavior was more insulting, for he sent a message that the Shah and the then Empress Soraya Esfandiary (1932–2001) are not allowed to enter the embassy. As Aqeli (2002) narrates, he even refused to send the Shah his personal car in the embassy (p. 639). In fact, Hossein Fatemi (1917–1954), the Minister of Foreign Affairs under the premiership of Mosaddeq, ordered both of them to no contact the Shah and claimed that he is abdicated and is no longer the Shah of Iran (p. 144). After the return of the Shah, Hossein Fatemi was executed on 10 November 1954, Qolamali Khajehnoori had no allowance to return to Iran till 1961, and Mozaffar A'lam faced with the same restriction till 1971. There is no possibility for the liberalization of politics in an atmosphere full of insecurity and without any hope for the future, i.e., the hope for continuity. The political conservatism under the Pahlavi monarchy could not put an end to the antagonist relationship between stability and liberty.

Mutual pessimism replaced the possible mutual understanding. There were many wrong prejudices about the very royal family and the “money” which they were stealing every day from the country.⁴ Particularly, despite the historical facts that Empress Farah Pahlavi, or the *Shahbanu* to give her Persian title, served Iran with many cultural and educational efforts, the patriarchal society woven with political Islam and anti-Western intellectualism, pictured her as a rich woman who wants just to lighten the despotism of her husband, or reduces the autocratic weight⁵ of the system and soften the “foreign installed” dictatorship. The Western left accused Farah Pahlavi of ignoring the crimes and corruptions of the Shah, as a merely installed monarch by the CIA who made Iran a land full of starvation,

⁴ Regarding the strong propaganda against Pahlavi, the Shah was being questioned in his international interviews about his royal wealth and even the price of decoration in his office (AP Archive 2015).

⁵ For example, the Empress tries to justify the Pahlavi autocracy by referring the youth students who opposed the Shah to being brainwashed or being paid in order to run demonstrations outside the country. In this regard, even if the mentioned claims were true, which was partly, it cannot be considered as a diplomatic reaction or democratic rhetoric (thekinolibrary 2017c).

poverty, and even sexual diseases (Meinhof 1967). The mentioned domestic and international mentality pictured the Empress as an indifferent personality who takes no care about the sorrows of the nation and the pains of extremely poor people.

Referring to the similar anti-monarchic sensations, the same sense of hate against the queen, the wealth, and the royal hereditary position is recognizable in the time near the French Revolution of 1789. Edmund Burke, in his *Reflections*, defended Marie Antoinette emphasizing her feminine beauty, sensibility, noble characteristics and condemned the revolutionary violence against her due to deprived Europe of its chivalrous virtues. As an emphasis on moral emotions, Burke denounces the political spectacles of revolutionaries in holding up Marie Antoinette to public ridicule (F. Ferguson 2007).

I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning-star, full of life, and splendour, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! ... Little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her. (Burke 2003, p. 65)

The revolutionaries in Iran violated the *moral imagination* by insulting Empress Farah Pahlavi during 1978–79 to shout misogynic slogans against her (Ghahremani 2018), tearing off her pictures and burning them. Moreover, the anti-Shah opposition has taken a paradoxical position to ridicule the Shah's pessimism about the actualization of the feminine will in human history during his interviews with Oriana Fallaci. At the same time, they neglect that the Shah made an impressive, intellectual, and progressive woman, Empress Farah Pahlavi, as the second official figure of a semi-traditional country and commemorate her as the symbol of Iranian cultural development for two decades. In other words, the anti-Shah opposition projects their own 'bad conscience' to the Shah, because they supported Ayatollah Khomeini who believed that "those women who freely mingled with men in society produced nothing other than corruption throughout the whole of the *taghut* period" (Khomeini 2001, p. 43).

With all these considerations, the conclusion must consider that the opponents of the Ancien Régime in Iran had no actual image in their minds about the fundamentality of the Pahlavi developing plan and fragility of the whole reformist political structure in the domestic realm. That is also a main contradictory character of the Pahlavi monarchy due to its unseasonable nature as a benevolent autocracy in a still traditional society with less serious and honest secular and democrat opposition. The political system was reformist in economy, social liberty, public welfare, peaceful regional and international policy, but it failed to

represent itself as a self-reformable system and bring the alternative from inside the then political order at the right time. Expectedly, the reformist system became a victim of its own failure in domestic politics and being a target of oppositional hatred which made a historical gamble to put an end to the Shah's reign even by assisting in building an Islamic state in Iran. In the end, the whole country collapsed due to two devastating fragilities; the weak reformist bureaucratic structure and the non-existent religious reforms as a movement with decisive socio-cultural consequences. As it is explained in chapter 4.2.1, the discussion of a hypothetical religious reformation in pre-revolutionary Iran is in correlation with the debate of the inevitability of the Revolution.⁶ The weakness of the reformist bureaucracy can be summarized with the lack of socially confirmed principles that could be raised to the level of democratic agreement, the lack of adherers who were faithful to the constitution, and ultimately the lack of loyal bureaucrats and politicians who stand with the Shah and the Royal Family due to *chronological and mortal/earthly virtue* of the system as a benevolent autocracy. The non-existence of a supposedly historical religious reform is clear with a sudden change in a life of an old exiled Mullah in Najaf who sent a secret message to the Shah begging, a few years before Revolution, to be forgiven and requested of coming back directly to Qom to spend the rest of his life in the Shiite seminary in Iran. Soon, the situation reversed in an unbelievable way; the Shah was seeking refuge outside his homeland, and Khomeini was preparing to come back to Iran as a revolutionary leader. Eventually, the absence of the "proper organ for constitutional repair" (Lock 2006, p. 310) in the Pahlavi monarchy drove Iran into the era of permanent instability in the Islamic Republic. The mentioned defects in the bureaucratic and religious realm led to the loss of all achievements since the Constitutional Revolution of 1905. The redress of Iranian grievances would be best served through forming a transition, more likely revolutionary than governmental, to the rule of law under liberal democracy. Regardless of any future theoretical innovation in Shiism, there is no avoidance to change the Shiite establishment by a lawful process and in the light of liberal values in the post-Islamic Republic era of Iran.

⁶ As Nagel (1979) enlightens us, the conceptual restrictions of the thesis come back to the very nature of human mentality in its evaluation of success and failure or goods and evils. Seeking the possibility of survival condition from 1979 within the framework of conciliating relation between politics and religion is an evident example of what Nagel diagnoses. In other words, the will to push the boundaries of the past in a theoretical perspective generates degeneration because it shows us an evil that owes its existence to the contrast, which in its turn, comes out of the gap between reality and the possible alternatives. "A man is the subject of good and evil as much because he has hopes which may or may not be fulfilled, or possibilities which may or may not be realized, as because of his capacity to suffer and enjoy" (pp. 6, 7).

Glossary⁷

Āyāt al-tashb'ih An Arabic phrase that refers to anthropomorphic verses in the Quran

Ahādūth Plural of *hadīth*

Ahura Mazda The creator and sole God of Zoroastrianism: Ahura Mazda is the highest spirit of worship in Zoroastrianism. The literal meaning of the word *Ahura* is “lord,” and that of *Mazda* is “wisdom.” Rashidian (1978) believes that, according to the ancient Zoroastrian scripture *Dīnkard*, Ahura means *Shahriyārī* (see below) and Mazda refers to religious laws. In this sense, *Ahura Mazda* is considered as the religious-conceptual foundation of ideological unity between Iranian kingship and Zoroastrianism.

Ajāneb “Foreigners” in the Iranian xenophobic view

Akhbār Traditions, sayings attributed to the prophet and the infallible Imams. The Shiite equivalent of the Sunni *ahādūth*.

Akhbārī A mainly eighteenth-century school of thought in Iraq and Iran. The *Akhbārīs* prioritized the role of the Traditions (see *akhbār*) over independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). Opposed to the Uṣūlīs (see below).

Akhūnd Term of a low-ranking member of the *ulama*

Akhūndhaie Mortaje' It means “the regressive Mullahs” in the language of Ruhollah Khomeini to devaluate their apolitical tendency and their Shiite piety

⁷ To gather some of the meaning and terms, it should be pointed out that the works of Denis Martin MacEoin, Harry Austryn Wolfson, Muhammad Qasem Zaman, Moojan Momen, Susan Siavoshi, Hamid Dabashi, Charles Melville, Said Amir Arjomand, and Sepehr Zabih are being used partly in this section.

to make the distance from the politics, which prevent him from gaining the clerical support in his struggle against the Pahlavi monarchy.

'Ālamiyyat The highest specialty in religious knowledge

'Allāmah An efficient learned member of the ulama, learned in all fields of the Islamic knowledge

'Ālim Religious scholar

'Ālim 'Ādil Just scholar

Al-Dajjal *Al-Masīḥ ad-Dajjāl* refers to “the deceiving Messiah,” a specific deceiver who is characterized in many *hadīths* as an anti-Allah personage in the Islamic eschatology and related apocalyptic literature (Al-Naysaburi n. d.). In this sense, the Dajjāl is an evil being and an infidel who wants to impersonate the true Messiah in the final events of the history of the world.

Al-'ilm (in Shiism) The initiatory knowledge of Shiite Imams

Al-Umūr al-Hasbiyyah Restricted scope of guardian-less matters in Islamic society, such as unattended children

Aql The reason; a source in the Islamic theology and jurisprudence (sometimes used in Arabic literature as “experience”)

Ash'arism The leading and dominant theological school of Sunni Islam that established orthodox Islamic principles, founded by the Arab theologian Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (c. 874–936). It developed during the fourth and fifth/tenth and eleventh centuries. The followers of the school are known as Ash'arites, and it is referred to as the Ash'arite school.

Ashura The tenth day of Muḥarram, the first month in the Islamic calendar, which is being commemorated by the majority of Shia Muslims for the death of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad, at the Battle of Karbala in the year 61 AH (in AHt: October 10, 680 CE)

Bast/Bast-neshini A sanctuary is a sacred place, such as a shrine. It refers to a safe place as a political sanctuary. It is the practice of seeking protection in a holy place to protest an injustice or escape persecution.

Bonyād-e mostaz'afin The new Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled or “MFJ,” also known as the Foundation of the Disinherited. It is founded by Ayatollah Khomeini, absorbed the Pahlavi Foundation, and despite its name, was a conglomerate of 1049 enterprises and 2786 real estate units by 1982. It is one of the biggest military-industrial-commercial complexes under the Islamic Republic.

Būy-ie Khūn The smell of blood; a normative statement of Mohammad Reza Nikfar, an Iranian leftist intellectual, about the read of the Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi in The Wall Street Journal to support the public patriotic slogan in uprisings since January 2018 “we want our country back.” Nikfar interpreted it

as promoting violence against the Islamic Republic and the anti-Shah opposition of 1979.

Dādghāh-e Sahrāey Drumhead court-martial

Darbār The Iranian Royal Court

Dokhtarān-e Khīyābān-e Enqelāb Girls of Enghelab Street; young Iranian women who protest since 2018 against the compulsory Islamic *hijab* in the Islamic Republic of Iran by discovering a new approach in the history of civil disobedience; appearing in public without hijab while they tied their headscarf to a stick and waved it to the crowd as a flag.

Dokhtarān-e Khīyābān-e ShahReza Girls of ShahReza Street; an indication in the thesis on the possible continuation between the emancipation of women in 1936 from above and the feminine self-emancipatory struggle from below in 2018. Symbolically, it uses the former name of *Enqelāb* Street before the Islamic Revolution. Women received their liberty without self-consciousness from Reza Shah, and they pursue it during the movement of *Dokhtarān-e Khīyābān-e Enqelāb* with their awareness of its vitality.

Estebād-e Saqīr The Short Despotism: Historically, the period between June 1908 and June 1909 under the reign of Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar who abolished the Constitution of 1905, dissolved the Parliament, and then bombarded the *Majlis*.

Estebād-e Shaikh va Shah The despotism of the clergy and the Shah; an ideological term coined by the anti-Shah opposition to equate the Shah and Aya-tollah Khomeini. The oversimplifying term aimed to reduce the entire Pahlavi monarchy to despotism resulted in the same devaluation of both times (before and after 1979).

Faqīh The Islamic jurist (*Fuqahā* is plural)

Farhang-e Taqut The culture of idolatry; Khomeini coined it concerning Quranic term to devalue the modernization during the Pahlavi monarchy

Fatwa A ruling on the point of religious law, issued by a senior cleric (in Sunnism a *mufti*, in Shiism a *mujtahid*)

Fedāʾiān-e eslām The Islamic terrorist group called “Devotees of Islam” or literally “Self-Sacrificers of Islam,” committed many bloody assassinations. Its founder Navvab Safavi (1924–1956), a young radical Shia Mullah, was executed by the Pahlavi government. In the period between 1942 and 1953, they were responsible for the assassination of at least ten prominent Iranian politicians.

Feqh The Islamic Jurisprudence

Feqh-e Javāheri The classical Shiite jurisprudence

Feqh-e Maslahat (or Maslehat-e Feqhi) The expedient jurisprudence or the juristic expediency; what Khomeini coined to prioritize the political power of the jurist over the jurisprudence

Feqh-e Pūyā The dynamic jurisprudence; the claim that the Shiite jurisprudence is capable of aligning itself with the contemporary implications and the current necessities due to its supposed innovative process of *ijtihād*.

Fitnah An Arabic term with extensive connotations of trial, affliction, distraint, distress, or sedition. It has important historical implications in the Quranic context. In the political history of Islam, it refers to the incitement of resistance in front of a Caliph or insurrection against religiously legitimate authority.

Ghālīn (singular ghālī) A Shiite term for theological extremists who go beyond what is considered reasonable in what they claim about the Prophet and Imams. They are regarded as a deviant orthodoxy in Shia Islam.

Ghadrshenāsi The gratitude. It indicates the traditional relationship between people and government in which one side is a giver, and the other side is an appreciator.

Gharbzadegi Westoxification or Westoxication: It was coined originally by Ahmad Fardid (1910–1994) and firstly was being used in the works of Jalal Al-e-Ahmad (1923–1969). It refers to a nativist anti-Western ideology to confront the Westernization of Iran during the Pahlavi monarchy.

Ghulāt Exaggerators; extreme gnostic group in Shiism

Hadīth A narrative about Muhammad, relating his words and deeds. The body of traditions is considered a source of Islamic law and practice.

Heyāt-e Hākemeh The administration

Hezbollah (in Iran) The party of God; Khomeini coined it to promote his own desired way of public participation, reduces the people to his supporters in the populist theocracy after 1979.

Hosseiniyyeh Ershad A non-traditionalist Islamic institute established by religious intellectuals and a new generation of Shiite clergies in pre-revolutionary Iran. It was closed for a time by the Pahlavi monarchy in 1972. Ali Mirsepassi illustrates that *Hosseiniyyeh Ershad* along with three periodical publications, includes *Maktab-e Tashayyo* (see below), formed the desired discourse of the Islamic Revolution.

Ali Shariati held his anti-Pahlavi speeches here before the revolution. Mir-Hossein Mousavi (under the pseudonym Hossein Rah'jo) and Zahra Rahnavaṛd exhibited artworks here during the same period.[2]

Hosn va Qohb-e Aqli The rational characteristics of right and wrong in the human deeds when access to reality by human reason is considered

Hosn va Qohb-e Zāti The essential characteristics of right and wrong in the human deeds when the reality is considered

Ijmā' Consensus. Sunnism and Shiism both acknowledge it to signify the agreement of the religious establishment in matters of doctrine and law. Shiite *fiqh* approved it only conditionally as a way to discover the intention of Imams.

Ijtihād The process of arriving at judgments on points of religious law using reason and the principles of jurisprudence. It has fallen into disusage among the Sunnis and misusage between Shiite *mujtahid*.

Iranshahri The Persopolitan, in contrary to *Jahanshahri* (see below)

Iran Novin Party 'New Iran Party': It was a royalist political party in Iran from 1964 to 1975. *Mardom Party* (see below) was regarded its opposition

IRI (abbreviation) The Islamic Republic of Iran

Ithna-'ashari The Twelver Shia Islam

Jahanshahri The Cosmopolitan in contrary to *Iranshahri* (see above)

Jalil al-Qard The usually religious glorification of infallible Shiite Imams as "sacred honorable saints."

Jomhuri Republic

Kalām Speculative Islamic theology

Kashf al-Asrār The unveiling of Secrets; the early theological-political treatise of Ruhollah Khomeini in 1943

Khāstgāh-e Mardomi The rise from the ordinary people; the Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi refers to the origin of his royal family as such.

Mahdī The specific name of the occulted Imam in Shia Islam

Maktab-e Tashayyo School of Shiism: A series of intercommunal discussions between Shiite clergies (and intellectuals with religious affiliation) which were published between 1959 and 1965. Ali Mirsepassi believes that this publication along with two similar ones and ultimately the *Hosseiniyyeh Ershad* (see above) contributed significantly to form a "modern" discourse of political Shiism.

Mamlūk An Arabic designation for slaves: It is mainly used to refer to non-Muslim slave soldiers and Muslim rulers of slave origin, like a Turkish dynasty made up of slave conscripts who ruled Egypt from 1250 till 1517.

Mihna The *Mihna* was instituted by al-Ma'mūn in the 218/ 833 Common Era in which religious scholars were persecuted unless they conformed to Mu'tazila doctrine. The Muslim scholars were being tested on their loyalty to some Mu'tazilite principles like the "createdness" of the Quran.

Mobad (or Mobed) A Zoroastrian cleric of a particular rank. Unlike a *herbad* (ervad), a *mobed* is qualified to serve as celebrant priest at the Yasna ceremony. A *mobed* has the qualification to teach other priests.

Mofsed fi al-Arz The corrupt of the earth; a vague Islamic judicial term which degrades the human dignity of dissidents, non-believers, and critics of Islamic believes by the attribution of *fesād fi al-arz* “spreading corruption on earth.” The term came out of the Islamic jurisprudence to the Iranian judiciary system with extensive and obscure inclusionary function after 1979. Whoever has been accused of committing *fesād fi al-arz* is generally subjected to execution.

Mut’azila A “rationalist” school of Islamic theology that flourished during the 8th to the 10th centuries. The followers of the Mu’tazili school, known as Mu’tazilites.

Madhhab A school of religious law or faith: A sect, as an identity, among Islamic schools

***Madras* (pl. *Madrasa*)** The location of Scholastic education in the Muslim seminaries

Mardom Party People’s Party was a liberal political party in the Pahlavi era of Iran. It was one of two major parties in the Shah’s attempt to impose a two-party system, apparently in opposition to the ruling *New Iran Party* (see above). *Madrom party* founded on 16 May 1957 and ended on 2 March 1975.

Marja Alternatively, *marja-e taqlid*, literally meaning “source to imitate” or “religious reference.” It is a title given to the highest plane Shia authority, a Grand Ayatollah with authority to issue *fatwa* within the confines of Islamic law for followers and junior clerics.

***Marja al-Taqlid* (pl. *Marāji’ al-Taqlid*)** The reference point of imitation or authority to be followed; the highest rank within the Shii clerical hierarchy

Marja al-Taqlid al-Tām The supreme or general source of emulation; the emergence of one person as the most qualified clergy to obtain the highest rank over other *marāji’ al-taqlid*. The clearest example was Ayatollah Hossein Boroujerdi Tabataba’i (1875–1961) who became the Supreme Marja until his death.

Marjaiyyat The state of being a juristic reference for followers.

Majlis-e Khobregān The Assembly of Experts; an Islamized *Majlis-e Moassesān* formed with Shiite senior clergies to supervise the guardian jurist, though it was always subordinated to the founder of the Islamic Republic, i.e., Ayatollah Khomeini and the current supreme leader. Its historical role is identified to announce Ali Khamenei as the successor of Khomeini the day after his death on 4 June 1989. Hashemi Rafsanjani was the prominent actor behind the seemingly legalized decision.

Majlis-e Moassesān The Constituent Assembly; was the supreme assembly without the means of applying its authority by itself. It was established to bring the critical situation of monarchy back to order. At the end of the Qajar dynasty, it played a significant role to peacefully transfer the power to the last monarchic

succession of Iran. It deposed the young Ahmad Shah Qajar and declared Reza Khan the new Shah (King) of the Imperial State of Persia on 12 December 1925.

Mashruteh The Persian Constitutional Revolution which took place between 1905 and 1911

Marja “Source of imitating” or “religious reference” The highest rank among Shiite clergies.

Majlis The Parliament of Iran; an Iranian council.

Mellat Nation

Mofsed fi al-Arz Corruptor on earth; a vague Islamic juristic accusation with severe consequences mainly being sentenced to death

Mufti Sunnite Islamic Jurist

Mujtahid One who exercises *ijtihad* in religious and legal matters. The term is limited to early legists in Sunnism but is used widely in Shiism, where it applies to a category of *ulama* who exercise authority in the occultation.

Ne'mat-e Elāhi The divine grace; the description of Khomeini about the Iran-Iraq war. It is connected with debates in Sections 2.2.1 and 3.4 about *Uṣūlī* doctrine, the political theology of Khomeini, the sanctification of suffering, and the problem of evil. The mentioned chapters also deal with the Burkean analysis of the aesthetic aspects of fear as an instance of sublimity; the powerful remained heritage of Christian piety in the West and the roots of the Western sympathy with the Islamic Republic as the only theocracy in the world.

Niru-ye Sevom The Third Force, founded by Khalil Maleki (1901–1969) as a non-Tudeh, Marxist Toilers Party. It emerged from the non-aligned political movement in Iran which advocated an independent, socialist–nationalist idea of development. The Third Force is a crucial phase in the Iranian democracy struggle after 1953.

Nokhbeh-koshi Isolating, Dismissing, or killing the nobles and elites by the ruler in Iranian history. In accord with the liberal-conservative philosophy, *Nokhbeh-koshi* is not a one-sided political defect or moral depravity.

Pākdini It is the doctrine of Ahmad Kasravi that expresses the idea of pure religion and denies the authenticity of the religious diversity in human history.

Pahlavite Shiism The Shia Islam under Pahlavi monarchy: Nikfar (2016a, 2016b) coined it to explain the transformations of Shiism during 1925–1979. However, he used the term intentionally to picture an inherent tie between Shiism (as a religious ideology) and the Pahlavi monarchy, which supposedly ended with the leadership of Khomeini. Therefore, the term belongs to Iranian libertarianism as it is discussed in Section 3.3.1. Regardless of its conceptual vagueness, the word works to attribute Islamic characteristics of the Revolution 1979 to the

Shah's policy and justify the term of *Estebdād-e Shaikh va Shah* (see above). Some of its historical claims about the emergence of the Qom Shiite Seminary are being assessed at the end of Section 3.2.1.

Qādeh-ie Molāzemeh The principle of mutual implication: In *Uṣūlī* school, it has a slim possibility for the reason to infer that "What reason draws as the conclusion, it is the law of Sharia." However, the opposite way is the dominant part of the *Uṣūlī* formula "What Sharia determines as the law, it is the conclusion of the reason." Therefore, the reason is only a preparation and an instrument for divine laws.

Ghayba Occultation (the absence of the Twelfth Imam).

Qā'im The characterizing title of the occulted Imam who the one who rises and brings justice back and who would establish the rule of truth

Qowm People

Qiyās The principle of analogy in Sunni Islam; Shiite jurisprudence has taken an orthodox position by rejecting it

Rejāl-e Pahlavi The politicians with adherence to the Pahlavi monarchy: It is the suggestion of Ali Amini to the Shah that the Pahlavi monarchy needs to form its own politicians and should be developed beyond technocrats, bureaucrats, and political elites.

Sadr-e A'zam The Grand Vizier: The title of the head of government of many sovereign states in the pre-modern Greater Middle East.

Sahm-i Imam The portion of the income received by prominent *ulama* as lawful de facto deputies of the Imam

Saltanat Monarchy in the Muslim world

Sayyid Sir, Mister, lord: A descendant of the Prophet.

Shabestarism The pro-Islamic criticism to reform Islam and makes it civilized. The term is coined as an inspiration of the intellectual efforts of Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari (1936-), former revolutionary clergy, in Iran.

Shafā'a In general, it is related to the Islamic intercession and peculiarly refers to Shiite mediation of Imams. The intercession in Shia Islam in the form of a specific practice by praying at the tombs of Imams becomes a disputable issue in the Islamic world and is considered by the majority of Sunni Muslims as an invented ritual against the Islamic teachings and the monotheistic concept of Allah.

Shafaism The anti-Islamic criticism to reform Islam and makes it civilized: The term is coined as an inspiration of the intellectual efforts of Shojaeddin Shafa (1918–2010), the former cultural architect of Pahlavis, in exile.

Shah King

Shahbanu The Iranian Empress: Iran had only one Shahbanu in its actual history, regardless of mythical history, and she is *Shahbanu* Farah Pahlavi (1938-)

Shāhnāmeḥ Book of Kings; an epic composed by the Iranian poet Hakim Abul-Qasim Mansur (later known as Ferdowsi Tusi), and completed around 1010 CE.

Shahriyārī The Iranian Kingship

Shura The principle of consultation in the Islamic Republic which is secondary and dominated by the Sharia and Imamāt (the tradition of Shiite infallible Imams)

Šir-o Koršid The Lion and Sun: One of the main emblems of Persia, and an element in Iran's national flag at that time

Sultan The Islamic monarch

Sunna Historically, the term is defined based on the custom and practice of the Prophet Muhammad.

Šūrā-ye Saḷṭanat The Iranian Royal Regency Council

Tāqut A Quranic term which means any phenomenon represents the false God or power in front of Allah). Ruhollah Khomeini coined the word as a famous label for the whole 2500 years of monarchy in general and the Pahlavi dynasty in particular.

Tafviz Delegation of authority.

Takfir The death sentence, *fatwā*, condemning impiety and infidelity regarding Islam

Tanzīh The elevation of God above any likeness to created beings; an opposite of *tashbīh* (see below)

Taqiyya Prudence or fear: A preventive deceit and a temporal denial of religious faith due to fear of being persecuted. In the supposed situation, man is allowed to lie about his own belief to preserve his life. *Taqiyya* is mostly the policy of Shia Imams and their followers to be survived under Umayyad and ʿAbbāsīd Caliphates.

Tashbīh Likening; likening God to human beings (anthropomorphization); an opposite of *tanzīh* (see above)

Tatbir (Ghamehzani) It is the self-harm as an act of mourning by some Shia Muslims to commemorate the sacred memory of Husayn ibn Ali during Ashura.

Ta'zieh The performance of religious tragedies: In Persian culture, it refers to Condolence Theater, and it signifies the expression of grief and mourning.

Tobehnāmeḥ The letter of repentance which is usually written unwillingly by political prisoners under totalitarian regimes

Tobehnāmeḥ-nevisi The act of writing the letter of repentance

Tullāb Theology students in the traditional Islamic seminaries

Ulama An Arabic plural word which means literally “the learned ones” and peculiarly refers to the traditional Muslim scholars of Islam who are usually official members of the religious establishment in “Islamic” countries. According to the Encyclopedia of Islam (2000), the original meaning is “denotes scholars of almost all disciplines.” In the context of Islamic history with recognition of the Sunni tradition as the largest denomination of Islam, *ulama* are considered as “the guardians, transmitters, and interpreters of religious knowledge, Islamic doctrine, and law.”

Umma Umma is an Arabic word for “community” and refers to the Muslim society in comparison to pagans, Christians, Jews, and other non-Muslim surroundings.

Uṣūl Principles, bases. (Sg. *aṣl*.)

Uṣūl al-Dīn The principles of religion; are the Koran and the Sunna of the Prophet in Sunnism and are being added by the Sunna of Imams in Shiism

Uṣūlī al-fiqh Principles of jurisprudence are used to arrive at a judgment in Islamic law.

Uṣūlī The dominant school of thought in Shia Islam since the 19th century.

Vizier A high-ranking political advisor or minister: The ‘Abbāsid caliphs gave the title *wazīr* to a minister formerly called *kātib* (secretary), who was at first merely an assistance but afterward became the representative and successor of the *dabīr* (official scribe or secretary) of the Sassanian kings.

Wahhābism As MacEoin (1979) illustrates, it is a “puritanical and radical school of Islam ... in Saudi Arabia, where it is still the dominant form of the faith. Through Saudi patronage, Wahhābism has extended its influence ... The Wahhābīs are vehemently opposed to ... Shi’ism” (p. 29).

Walī “Custodian, guardian, defender.” The term has broad legal use, and in Shiism is used regarding the Imams. In Sufism, it refers to saints. Pl. *awliyā’*.

Walī al-Amr MacEoin (1979) defines it as “the guardian of the cause [of God]: A Shii expression used for the twelfth Imam” (p. 30).

Walī-i Faqih The guardian jurist

Waqf As MacEoin (1979) articulates, it includes “Islamic territory won by conquest. Property or other goods established or given for religious and related purposes (such as schools, hospitals, and madrasas) and deemed inalienable” (p. 30).

Wilaya The status of guardianship in legal and spiritual terms (see *walī*).

Wilāyat-i Feqh The juristic guardianship or, with more adherence to its rhetoric emphasis, the guardianship of the jurisprudence

Wilāyat-i Faqih The central part of the political theology of Ruhollah Khomeini is known as “the guardianship of the jurist” or as “the leadership of the jurist.”

Wilāyat-i Motlaqeh The unconditional guardianship or absolute authority over all matters, in the opposite of *al-umūr al-hasbiyyah* (see above); Khomeini believes that the *wilāyat-i faqih* is just like what prophet and Imams had. Therefore, the guardianship of the jurist is not limited under the Islamic laws, because the purpose of Sharia is to constitute an Islamic government. The political power of the jurist is beyond any juristic restriction.

Wilāyat-i Siyāsi The political guardianship or, with more adherence to its rhetoric emphasis, the guardianship of the politics

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